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PARADISE PLUMES

from the *FARMYARD*

Millinery ideas that save world's rare birds

A new bird of paradise discovered in New Guinea has two white tail plumes nearly three feet long—but milliners aren't interested.

Nowadays, 98 per cent. of hat feathers come from the farmyard and the bird of paradise is free to trail his glory through the treetops unmolested.

PROTECTED by law, these magnificent birds are even more surely protected by being out of fashion.

Anybody may wear paradise plumes if they were in her possession prior to the ban on plume trading.

But to modern taste such rich cascades of feathers look glorious on a bird but not on a hat.

An Australian feather-worker—a plumassier—said this week that he wouldn't pay cartage on a load of paradise plumes.

Further, he could, if he wished, make a set of paradise plumes from common feathers so like the real thing that even an ornithologist could detect the fake only by close examination.

But he'd be wasting his time because no one would want them at any price.

If paradise plumes did come back into fashion, it would be quite a long time before any more birds were killed.

Plume hunters, plume traders, and London warehouses all have ample unwanted stocks.

So, where once the bird of paradise was king of the millinery trade, there now strut the homely duck, the succulent turkey and the common rooster.

The white turkey is best of all. There is practically no waste feather on him, even the soft body feathers being dyed for trimming mounts.

Oddly enough, the brilliant parrots and other wild birds of Australia



A BIRD OF PARADISE parades his plumes. These could be closely copied by a feather-worker in common feathers.

yield next to nothing for the feather-worker.

In most cases only the tips of their feathers are colored.

The scrub turkey and white cockatoo have some useful feathers, the

AMUSING leather cocktail hat.

eagle yields a few good blacks, hawks provide for sports hat mounts, and a couple of Tasmanian sea-birds come into the picture.

Plumassier's art

THE local plumassier had plenty of examples of his craft to display. One was a glorious royal-blue, captivantly curled at the end . . . just the tail feathers of a farmyard rooster.

There were broad bold beauties in orange, green and red with lovely markings. They came from a turkey.

There were long tapering ones in soft greens provided by the pheasant. There were tiny round spotted feathers from the guinea fowl.

There were tailored quills straight from the birthday suit of a duck.

"He was awfully good eating, that duck," said the plumassier thoughtfully. "We usually buy the whole bird, and they're awfully tired of poultry in my family . . ."

"There was a time when my child—ren simply wouldn't eat another wing of pheasant. It might be a luxury to most, but it was worse than corned beef to us."

"Sometimes I just go up to the markets and buy a bird, pluck it then and there and give the bird back to the seller. He usually thinks I'm quite mad . . . but we must eat meat sometimes."

The plumassier smoothed a ruffled quill.

"It makes me mad when I see people wearing ruffled feathers in their hats," he said forcefully.

"Think of it, a bird spends three-quarters of its life preening its feathers and then people fluff quills the wrong way because of some silly notion that they're smarter like that."

On the score of cruelty, the trade



THIS TYPE of simple feather trimming has replaced the one-time lavish use of gorgeous plumes.

RIGHT: Tinted quills from a turkey.

in paradise plumes was actually not so horrible nor so destructive as the trade in "ospreys."

Only adult male birds were shot, and they are several years old before the display plumes are at their best. It is thought that they would have bred several times before that.

But to deck women in "osprey" feathers, a species of lovely bird was almost rendered extinct.

"Osprey" is a name borrowed from fish-hawks with useless feathers to describe the exquisite plumes of the egret or snow-white heron.

These plumes are at their best in the breeding season, and when thousands of birds were killed many more thousands of baby egrets died of starvation.

To-day the traders sell tobacco—and beauty files unharmed.

Let's Talk Of Interesting People



MR. ARCHIBALD MACLEISH
Magna Charta keeper.

CONGRESSIONAL Librarian at Washington, U.S.A., Mr. Archibald Macleish has Magna Charta in his safe-keeping during the war.

At a broadcast ceremony the historic document, which had been displayed at the World's Fair, was entrusted to the library by British Ambassador Lord Lothian.

"An action full of meaning for our time," Mr. Macleish said.



MLLE. JEDRZEJOWSKA
"Miss Yah Yah."

A FEW months ago Polish tennis star Mlle. Jadwiga Jedrzejowska, affectionately known as "Miss Yah Yah," was flashing about Wimbledon courts in world championship matches. Now she is working as a waitress in a cafe in devastated Warsaw.

Mlle. Jedrzejowska returned to Warsaw after finding her parents destitute in Cracow.



MR. F. W. BOVINGTON
Underground traffic.

AS traffic controller of the London Passenger Transport Board, Mr. F. W. Bovington controls London's underground trains.

Not one can be half a minute late without Mr. Bovington knowing it.

He can divert trains, stop them, order them to speed up, start or stop lifts or escalators.

It's New!!

RADIANT

"Peach"



ERASMIC
Peach

this Summer's Lovely Powder Shade



LIKE a rosy, sun-kissed child—that's the effect your powder must give this Summer, and that's just how the new Erasmic Peach makes you look! So warm, so subtle . . . it gives your skin a flattering, rosy underglow. Get a box of this filmy English powder to-day! See how young and pretty you'll look! Other shades—Natural, Rachel, Brunette and Suntan.

Erasmic Creams (Vanishing or Cold) 1/- TUBE

57.45.27

Australian women's ordeal in Nazi prison

Hope for release soon—
after months of suspense

By Beam Wireless from Mary St. Claire, Our London Representative

Just released from Germany, where she was interned, and still wearing the same dress in which she escaped from bomb-wrecked Warsaw, Miss M. White, an English schoolteacher, told me how Australian women held by the Nazis are faring.

Miss Alma Graf, an Australian, who was holidaying in Hamburg with her 69-year-old aunt, Miss Gomm, will be released soon.

They were clapped in prison by the Nazis when war broke out. Miss White shared their company and the same prison fare.

MISS WHITE, who is still showing the strain of her experiences, arrived in London in company with half a dozen other English women released from Germany, including the wife of the well-known New Zealand Rhodes Scholar H. Mackenzie, formerly of Wellington University.

He was headmaster at an English school in Warsaw prior to the outbreak of hostilities.

"I was teaching in Gdynia for fifteen years, but holidaying in Warsaw when the German armies advanced into Poland," said Miss White.

"For fourteen days we slept in our clothes and ran hither and thither as the bombs burst around us.

"Eventually we escaped from the city only to be gathered up by the Gestapo.

"Mr. Mackenzie refused to leave, and stayed behind with other British men to help the Poles defend their country, but his wife went on to Berlin to take a chance of getting to England, a chance which to-day sees her and her little son Hubert safely in London."

Miss White, a tiny, frail, pretty woman in the middle thirties, told of her great friendship for the Australian women, Miss Graf and her aunt, whom she met in a Berlin hotel. "For the first weeks of the war we were all free and able to come and go as we liked, but we were always shadowed," she said.

In civil prison

EARLY one morning, however, we were awakened by the Gestapo, who took the Australians off to the criminal gaol. I, however, was not arrested then, and made every effort to obtain the release of my friends, or at least get them transferred to a civil prison.

"If it were not for the American Consul I do not know where we would be to-day. The Consulate was a haven of refuge for me in those weary and difficult days.

"Each day I visited the Australians to give them the hope that I somehow would effect their release.

"Then one day when our hopes were running at their highest I was arrested with Mrs. Mackenzie and her son Hubert in a general roundup.

"We were taken to a civil prison, where, after several days, I found my Australian friends with me.

"They had been transferred.

"We slept in a dormitory and were



HERR HIMMLER, head of the dreaded Gestapo. His men rounded up Australian women in Germany and put them in prison on the outbreak of war.



IRRITATION TACTICS. A German police trick is to let the air out of a tourist's car if they want to question the driver. Engines are also tampered with to cause delays.

taken out each morning for exercise in a small yard. We were then taken inside and spent the rest of the day in our dormitory.

"The food was plain, but there did not seem a great shortage. We were allowed visitors, and the attaches of the American Embassy visited us constantly and helped to keep up our spirit, which at times ran very low.

"We were allowed to keep our clothes, although most of mine were left behind in Warsaw.

"All our money was taken from us.

"Then one day came the joyful news. I was going back to England with Mrs. Mackenzie, Hubert, and other Britishers.

"I was still wearing the dress and coat in which I had escaped from Warsaw three months before.

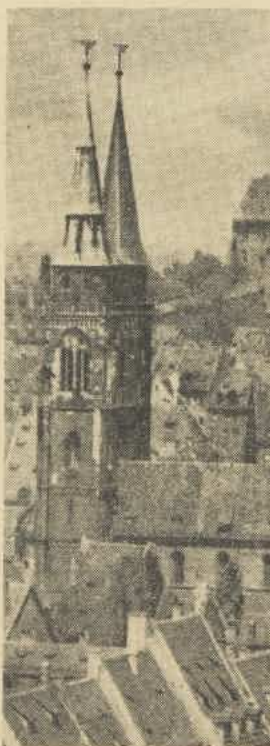
"Joy at my release, however, was tempered with sorrow when I found my Australian friends would not be coming with me.

"I spent my few days of freedom in Berlin trying to arrange the release of Miss Gomm, who is too old to be in prison.

"This I was able to do and she is now living in a Berlin hotel, while her niece Alma is still a prisoner.

"They are both in good health and keeping a stiff upper lip.

"I am confident that early next year will see both back in London with me."



NUREMBERG, peaceful-looking German city. It was from here that the Gestapo pursued Adelaide girl Hester Burden, who was on a motor tour of Germany.

News of South Australian girl

From Our Adelaide Office.

NO information is to hand concerning the other Australians in Germany, who now include Miss Lorna Smith, Miss Louisa Wacker, and Miss Hester Burden, 26-year-old Adelaide girl.

Miss Burden's mother, Mrs. F. R. Burden, of Norwood, S.A., has received a letter from her daughter in which she says she is safe and well.

In discussing her daughter's letter Mrs. Burden said: "Hester says



THIS PICTURE of Hester Burden was taken in Berlin just prior to the outbreak of war. She is one of several Australians detained in Germany.

she is not interned but merely detained from leaving the country.

"She says she has perfect freedom and is permitted to go wherever she likes, but has to obtain a special permit when she wishes to travel from one town to another.

"She is occupying her time there doing some teaching.

"The food is good, and German people are not showing any resentment against her British nationality."

This letter is in striking contrast to the Australian girl's last letter to a friend in London. In it she described how she was harassed by the dreaded Gestapo who picked her up at Nuremberg while she was on a motor tour of Europe.

She said it was almost impossible to buy food and she was not allowed to stay in any hotel, but had to sleep in the car on the roadside.

She found villagers kind and courteous, often sharing their meal with her, but always the Gestapo would pick up her trail and make inquiry as to where she was going.

Invariably she found something wrong with the car when they parted company. Usually the air had been let out of the tyres or the engine tampered with.

In the letter her mother had just received Hester does not mention having met any other Australians also detained in Germany.



HERE'S a chance, Miss Freckleface, to try a remedy for freckles with the guarantee of a reliable concern that it will not cost you a penny unless it removes your freckles; while if it does give you a clear complexion the expense is trifling.

Simply get an ounce of Kintho—double strength—from any chemist and a few applications should show you how easy it is to rid yourself of the ugly freckles and get a beautiful complexion. Rarely is more than one ounce needed for the worst case.

Be sure to ask for the double-strength Kintho, as this strength is sold under a guarantee of money back if it fails to remove your freckles.

KINTHO DOUBLE STRENGTH

They marched down the street; ALL THE KING'S MEN!

Last week's great parade of
A.I.F. was an inspiring sight

By LESLIE HAYLEN

"It's going to be a sad march," said a lady in a black hat standing near where I saw the great march of the A.I.F. But six thousand sun-tanned soldiers marching six abreast swept away that idea. You can't live on memories, however poignant.

THEIR marching feet brought with them an awareness of war. A concrete sign that we are committed to another struggle. Their foot-steps ate up history and replaced it with something hard to define. Whatever it was it made us live in the present.

It wasn't a sad day. It was a proud day, if you are

a realist, and can face up to it.

It stilled our peacetime criticism. We have got an army after all.

After seeing the men and the way they marched, we should drop the word "second" from their title, and call them just the A.I.F. They have won their spurs.

And what has happened to the "giggle suits," as the boys christened their uniforms?

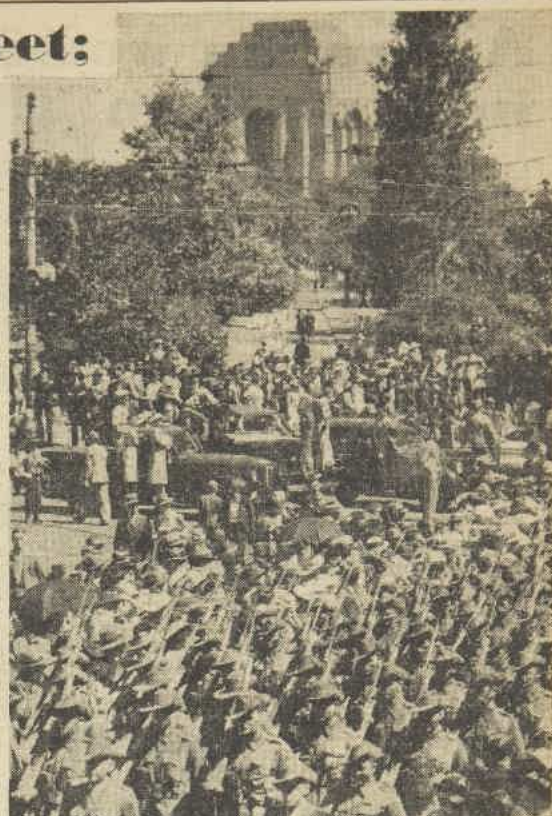
Those awful civilian-looking slacks.

Some genius in the ordnance department thought of gaiters—short canvas leggings, which with the jaunty tilt of the famous slouch hat turned our recruits into a band of P. C. Wren legionnaires.

They marched like veterans returning from a campaign—not a civilian army a few months in the making.

The crowd was quick to catch the tempo of the day.

They cheered themselves hoarse. Waves of cheering broke out long before the men came abreast, and little boys danced on the pavements crazy with excitement. Pick-



PASSING THE WAR MEMORIAL in Hyde Park. A scene from the march of the Second A.I.F. through the streets of Sydney.

ing out the units of the forces—like they named the cars on the road in peacetime.

A LITTLE group of children in sunhats (I found out later they were from a private school) so far forgot themselves as to form a cheer group singing, "We want Russell." Their former teacher, now a sergeant in the A.I.F., hove in sight and they made the welkin ring.

At Hyde Park corner, near the War Memorial, an old lady in a black dress with a lavender sunshade sat on a stool for which she paid two shillings without a demur.

In an effort to make the welcome more personal, she invariably touched a soldier on the arm when he halted near and said, "How do you do!"

The soldiers themselves were inclined to be solemn. It was a big day for them. They had to put it over.

But smiles broke over their faces when the A.B.C. Band leading one battalion broke out with "Roll Out the Barrel."

An irrepressible wag drilled not to display too much exuberance couldn't stop his eyes from dancing.

When a group of his work-mates gave him a noisy welcome he waved and shouted until the sergeant looked his way.

Where is Reg?

IN Castlereagh Street, an extremely tall woman leaned over the crowd just as she might back in Wagga and said:

"Have you seen Reg? He's got red hair!"

Just then Reg arrived, six feet of Australian manhood, with the Tank Corps... Mum waved weakly and slipped from the crowd.

Near the Law Courts a group of society girls began to sing "Ferdinand, Ferdinand," and Ferdinand eventually came in sight—a young officer leading his men.

One of the girls told me

that they had all worn some distinguishing emblem, a flower, a certain type of scarf, a distinctive hat, so that Ferdinand could pick them out as a group.

A great bit of organisation there and Ferdy spotted them all right.

I gave up trying to estimate the crowd, but women and children predominated.

Patient crowds

MANY of them had come in from the suburbs early in the morning and after liming in the parks had taken up a good position early to watch the march.

The youngsters were all equipped with flags. They were sixpence early, came down to threepence just before the marchers came into sight, and a few minutes later the bottom had dropped out of the market and they were back to the normal penny each.

One highlight was the Scots Girls' Band. They swept along with a skirl of the pipes, and drew tremendous applause.

It is not necessary to state that they were there merely to supply a colorful note and are not members of the A.I.F.

At the saluting base the men were magnificent. They marched as though they had just stepped out instead of coming to the end of a long, weary march.

The Governor-General, Lord Gowrie, took the salute, and with him were ten generals.

A son was explaining this to his father, who was deaf. The elder man didn't quite get him and replied: "I always said there were too many State Parliaments." Anyway, it made the crowd laugh!

Light and shade. That is how it went. Down in Martin Place, where the crowd was at its thickest a woman spoke to me. She had a bundle of colored streamers in her hand which she waved while she talked.

She had been a girl working in an estate agent's office in Pitt Street when the Armistice was signed in 1918. With other girls from the office she mounted a motor lorry, drove through the streets, and joined in the general madness which marked the conclusion of the war to end war.

Her son marched in the Second A.I.F.

And just a fashion note to conclude with.

The girls tell me there is going to be a new color note on the dress counters soon. It's Ingledown tan.

Highlights

FROM THE
SUMMER FASHIONS
LOOK LOVELIER LONGER
with
CLIFTON'S RICE STARCH

Charming are the New Year's newest styles! Charming are the New Year's most modern fabrics! But remember: because they are modern, they need a modern starch... one that will preserve their one that will actually prolong their life! In a word: they need CLIFTON'S Lilywhite Rice Starch—the superfine starch made from Australia's highest-grade rice.

YOUR GROCER STOCKS IT!

Special Offer

SEND FOR PATTERNS OF THESE EXCLUSIVE FROCKS!

C35. In Plain white Linen or Pique. Sizes: 32in.-38in. bust. Material Required: 3½ yds.; 36in. wide.

C36. In Pin Spot Voile, or any Sheer Cotton material; Pique or Organdi trimmings. Sizes: 32in.-38in. bust. Material Required: Frock, 4 yds.; Contrast ½ yd., 36in. wide.

Clifford Love & Co. Ltd., 77 Clarence Street, Sydney, will post patterns and full directions for making these lovely tennis frocks on receipt of your name and address, together with the end panel from a 1lb. packet of Clifton's Lilywhite Rice Starch and 9d. in stamps—for each pattern required.



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Water Runs Downhill

A Complete Short
Story by

PUTNAM
JONES

MARK SEWARD could have laughed at himself, could have let the grim etching of mouth and eye acknowledge Heaven's final irony. For death, now that it had come, must be shared with a woman. Mark did not like women.

He played his lantern over the mass of earth and rock that had sealed them in the Bonne Chance mine. Not a chink showed where the ceiling had been; in fact, there was no longer any roof, no tunnel at all in the direction they had come.

He glanced at Cynthia Drake, slim in her boots and whipcord breeches. "The newspapers can write 'trapped' or 'entombed,'" he remarked. "For once they'll be right."

The girl's brown eyes were steady. Perhaps her cheeks had lost some of their color, possibly the knuckles of her clenched hands were a trifle white. But otherwise she was as cool as Mark himself.

"You're sure they can't reach us?" He shrugged. "In a month they might. The whole passage caved in."

"I'm sorry I insisted. It seems you were right."

"Never mind." No use talking now, he reflected. If he'd had a brain in his head, he'd have kept saying no when the job was first mentioned.

He'd stopped over in New York at the home office (International Mining Associates), on his way from Nevada to a new development in Chile. Wilson, director of the field men, had grabbed him and told him about this Drake woman who wanted an appraisal of a Canadian silver mine. A chilly number, Wilson called her, but easy to look at—and she was going with him, Mark protested for two days, then gave in.

CYNTHIA Drake turned out to be everything Wilson had promised. She was easily the most beautiful girl Mark had ever seen.

And she didn't bother him on the way to Toronto. She read a lot, and what little talking they did was about politics, foreign affairs, business conditions—men's stuff, all of it.

Mark was puzzled. Women weren't like that. Women were vain and scheming. Women were like coy, fluffy Blanche Perrin, whom he'd expected to marry once—till Blanche had acted on the theory that a certain Howard Burnham's salary would supply more of the abundant life than Mark's.

Yes, certainly Cynthia was no trouble until they reached the mine. The place, it turned out, hadn't been worked for fifteen years, and it was Mark's idea to round up a crew of men for the preliminary explorations. But Cynthia put her foot down. Danger or no danger, she insisted, nobody was going into the Bonne Chance except herself and Mark.

So they started in with some sandwiches, a thermos, and an electric lantern apiece. It wasn't hard going. The mine opened from the side of a cone-shaped hill and sloped downward at a five-degree angle, not too stiff a grade for hauling out ore.

Mark kept his light on the side walls, mindful that Cynthia wanted to know what the property was worth. The miners had evidently followed a tight vein and got it all out, for there were no visible outcroppings for the first half-mile.

He noticed, too, that the passage was in bad condition. The shoring was rotted, and water seepage had softened the rock above and below. It would take a good deal of money to restore safe operation.

But the danger had been more acute than either of them realised.



ILLUSTRATED BY WEF

"Keep away! This rock'll cave in!" Mark warned, but Cynthia kept advancing towards him.

They had just arrived at a sort of gallery—where the vein, perhaps, had once spread—when they felt a slight tremor under their feet, followed by a puff of air from the passage behind them. Then things happened fast.

A grinding, roaring din swept towards them down the tunnel, and they could see huge sections of the roof crash to the floor, bringing after them an avalanche of earth and smaller stones.

There was no telling what had started it: their voices, possibly, or the tramp of their feet. The miracle was that the slide stopped where it did. The rock above their heads had cracked, but the ceiling held.

"In one way," Mark said, "I have the advantage of you."

"Advantage?" she murmured. "What do you mean?"

He nodded at the big diamond on her left hand. "Women with engagement rings don't like to die."

"You sound quite sure of yourself."

"Am I wrong?" he retorted. "That

looks like a contract worth closing. Any woman would think so."

Cynthia raised one eyebrow a trifle. "Are you being unpleasant because you're frightened?" she asked. The words came out quietly, but they brought blood to Mark's cheeks.

YOU express yourself well," he grunted. After studying her for a moment, he asked abruptly, "Do you own this mine?"

"Yes."

"Is there another entrance?" "I think not."

"Think not?" he frowned. "Don't you know?"

"There's no other entrance on my father's map," she answered. "Does that satisfy you?"

"Not entirely. Why did you want this appraisal?"

Cynthia hesitated. "That is a personal matter."

"Death is a personal matter," Mark shrugged.

"Then let's go on down the tunnel. If there's another entrance, that's how we'll find it."

Mark shook his head. "We'd be foolish to go deeper without a good reason. There's one chance in a million they might reach us here, but if we put another slide behind us, the show is over."

After a brief silence she murmured, "What do you want to know?"

"The history of the place, why we're here, and so on. You've left me in the dark."

"I'll tell you what I can," she said, "which isn't much. It's what I don't know that worries me."

"What you don't know?"

"I'll explain that in a minute," she nodded. "The Bonne Chance, you see, was originally owned by my father and a man named Mallinson. They took five million dollars' worth of silver out of it. Then Daddy bought Mr. Mallinson's share, and presently the mine was closed."

"Did the vein peter out?"

"Nobody knows."

"I still don't understand."

Cynthia smiled wryly at him. "Nor does anybody else. Daddy would never talk about the place. He simply hauled the machinery out and put a watchman at the entrance to keep people away. We're the first to enter since then."

Mark was listening closely. "Was your father on good terms with his partner?" he asked.

"They were never close friends," she answered. "They met in the beginning because Herbert Mallinson had married Daddy's step-sister. Daddy was quite fond of her."

"Did he ever try to sell the mine?"

"On the contrary, he refused every offer for it."

"He's dead?"

"Last winter," she nodded slowly. "The queer thing is, the Bonne Chance was the only property he had when he died. He'd been living on his capital."

"So, naturally, you want to sell. Is that it?"

Please turn to Page 35

Our Serial Story

ROYAL ESCAPE

Hope is shattered again and again as the King's friends meet with cruel setbacks in their struggle to save him.

THE STORY SO FAR:

AFTER Cromwell defeated his army at Worcester, the young **CHARLES STEWART** had to flee for his life; and his only hope of safety lay in escaping to France.

Helped by numerous loyalists, particularly **LORD HARRY WILMOT**, he slips through the enemy's hands several times, and reaches the coast under pretence of eloping with pretty **JULIANA CONINGSBY**, cousin of **COLONEL FRANK WYNDHAM**, one of his former officers.

But several arrangements for a passage to France go astray, and the King is forced to return to **Colonel Wyndham's** home at Trent, while **Lord Wilmot** rides with **ROBERT SWAN**, his servant, and **HENRY PETERS**, **Colonel Wyndham's** servant, in search of help at Salisbury.

There he enlists the aid of two staunch Royalists, **JOHN COVENTRY** and **COLONEL ROBERT PHILLIPS**; but meanwhile **CAPTAIN MACEY**, one of Cromwell's officers, is on the King's trail, and **MRS. WYNDHAM** comes home in panic from a visit to the neighboring village of Sherborne, with the news that a large troop of Cromwell's soldiers has arrived there.

NOW READ ON:

THE only person to remain unmoved by this information was the King himself, who refused to believe that the troopers had come to Sherborne to search for him, but supposed instead that they were upon their way to the coast. As nothing more was heard of the troop, the Wyndhams were at last persuaded that he was right, and, much to his relief, relinquished a little of their anxious care.

But it was not until the 28th September, five days after the King's return to Trent, that **Colonel Phillips** came from my Lord Wilmot, at Salisbury.

It was with some trepidation that the Colonel was conducted into the King's presence, but when he found himself looking up at a tall, ugly young man in a much plainer suit of clothes than his own, who held out a hand to him and smiled in the friendliest fashion, his fears were banished. He went down heavily on to one knee to kiss the King's hand, saying awkwardly: "Your Majesty!"

"Oh, get up, man, get up!" said Charles. "Never kneel to me! What news do you bring me?"

"Good news, I trust, sir."

"Shall I set sail for France?"

"Ay, your Majesty, God willing!"

"Why, that is excellent hearing, and calls for a glass of Frank Wyndham's sack!" declared the King.

By the time several glasses of sack had been drunk, and the King had been prevailed upon to recount some of his adventures, **Colonel Phillips** had become quite at his ease, and was able to tell his own tidings as fluently as a naturally silent man could be expected to do.

His brother, **Robert Phillips**, had not found it an easy task to hire a barque in Southampton, but after sundry vicissitudes he had compounded with the master of a sailing

vessel to carry two gentlemen to France for the sum of forty pounds. This had been accomplished through the agency of a merchant of his acquaintance, and the final arrangements were to be made upon the following Wednesday, when **Robert Phillips** and the mariner were to meet at the Bear Inn, beyond the gates of Southampton.

Upon the following morning **Colonel Phillips** took leave of the King, and rode back to Salisbury. Three days later, on Wednesday, 1st October, another messenger arrived from Salisbury, in the person of one Mr. John Selleck, who announced himself to be Mr. Coventry's chaplain.

He was a nervous little man, very zealous to serve the King, but fearful of betraying him through some unwitting slip or carelessness. He told **Colonel Wyndham** that he had been at pains to approach Trent by devious and unfrequented roads; and spoke in hushed tones, as though he suspected spies to be lurking even in the Colonel's sunny parlor. He had brought with him a letter in cipher from my Lord Wilmot, which had been rolled into a pellet no bigger than a musket-ball. "To be swallowed at need!" he whispered.

This made the King laugh, but **Wyndham**, spreading the paper out, applauded such caution, and said that if his Majesty desired to send a message back to my lord it should be in the same fashion. While he transcribed the ciphered letter, the King leaned on the back of his chair, looking over his shoulder. It was soon discovered that my lord wrote not from Salisbury, but from **Hinton Daubney**, the home of Sir Lawrence Hyde.

"And where the devil may that be?" demanded the King, raising his head and bending an inquiring look upon the chaplain.

Mr. Selleck made him a little bow. "It is not far from Hambledon, if it please your Majesty, and near to the coast, about thirty miles from Salisbury, as I judge—to the south-east, of course."

"Thirty miles from Salisbury!" said the King in lively astonishment. "What in the name of all that's wonderful took my lord so far from Salisbury?"

"If it please your Majesty, my lord rode over to take counsel of Mr. Hyde," replied the chaplain, with another bow. "My lord deemed his lodging in Salisbury too public, and

Mr. Hyde's house being very convenient, and Mr. Hyde pressing him to remain there, he thought it wisest to be gone from Salisbury."

"My lord in the toils of his own alarms!" said **Wyndham** scornfully, under his breath.

"He on you, Frank, you are too severe!" said the King, with a chuckle. He bent again over the Colonel's shoulder. "What's this? I am to lodge where?"

"At Heale, the home of Mrs. Hyde, a few miles north of Salisbury," replied the Colonel, after wrestling with the cipher for a moment or two. "Who is Mrs. Hyde, Mr. Selleck?"

"A very trustworthy gentlewoman, sir, I do assure you, the relict of Mr. Lawrence Hyde of Heale."

"A very trustworthy gentlewoman, sir, I do assure you, the relict of Mr. Lawrence Hyde of Heale."



Illustrated by
WYNNE W.
DAVIES

Juliana wept when the time for parting came, but the King gently consoled her.

The King blinked. "The relict? I thought my lord was the guest of Lawrence Hyde?"

"Oh, no, your Majesty! That is to say, yes, your Majesty. But Mr. Lawrence Hyde of Hinton Daubney is but the nephew of Mr. Lawrence Hyde, deceased, of Heale, being the son of Nicholas Hyde, that was the eighth son of Sir Lawrence Hyde."

The King flung up his hands. "No more, I beseech you, Mr. Selleck! You have named me three Lawrence Hydies already, and my poor head reels."

"But two are deceased, your Majesty," explained the chaplain helpfully.

"I give them thanks. What more, Frank?"

The Colonel, who had by this time finished his transcription, rose, and gave it to the King. Charles read

it, remarking, when he came to the end: "My lord is mighty urgent to convey me to Heale, it seems. I think myself safe where I am. Give me that cipher of yours, Frank. I must send Harry an answer to his letter. I shall tell him not to seek to remove me from your house until he is sure of a vessel to carry us both to France. I have had my fill of wandering about the country."

The chaplain rode back to Salisbury upon the following morning, bearing the King's letter to my Lord Wilmot, and the King resigned himself to another period of waiting.

Since the Wyndhams dared not let him step outside the apartments set aside for his use, he was unable to stretch his legs, except by walking up and down his room, a restriction which he found hard to bear with patience.

To his hosts, he was invariably cheerful, making light of his troubles; but when he was alone the weight upon his spirits occasionally overpowered him, and he would sit lost in gloom, unable to see any hope in the future. With a bitter curl to his lips, he reflected that those who begged him not to risk his person could scarcely have looked ahead to see what he saw so clearly: a life worn out in exile.

As the days dragged past, he began to fret inwardly at his inaction. No soldiers rode into Trent to search for him, but rumors of his presence in Somerset were flying about the countryside, and he knew that it was time he slipped out of the county. When, upon the following Sunday, the 5th October, **Colonel Robert Phillips** arrived at Trent, he greeted him with hardly restrained eagerness, and, giving him his hand, asked swiftly: "What tidings do you bring me? Where is my lord?"

"Alas, sir, all our schemes have miscarried," said **Phillips** heavily. "When the master of that vessel came to the appointed place on Wednesday, it was but to tell me that his barque had been pressed to carry provisions to Blake's Fleet, which is lying before Jersey."

He saw the King's underlip begin to pout, and added: "I would not have your Majesty despair, however. A loyal friend, Dr. Henchman, has put my Lord Wilmot in the way of finding other means whereby you may escape out of England."

"What are these means?"

"There is a very honest man liv-

ing at Racton, by Chichester, sir, with whom Dr. Henchman is well acquainted, and who, we believe, may help your Majesty to a ship at some port in Sussex. He is one **Colonel George Gounter**, who married **Kate Hyde**, that was sister to **Lawrence Hyde** of Heale."

"What security for his Majesty is there at Heale?" demanded **Wyndham**.

"The best, for Dr. Henchman knows of a secret hiding-place there, which, in case of a surprise, his Majesty may enter into."

"Does this Mrs. Hyde know that it is the King who comes to her house?"

Colonel Phillips shook his head. "She has been apprised only of a distressed Cavalier's being wishful to find safe shelter for a space. Dr. Henchman not choosing to take it upon himself to disclose the secret without his Majesty's leave." His eyes travelled from **Wyndham's** face to the King's. He added: "If your Majesty will be pleased to go with me, I have made a particular study of the roads, and will engage to lead your Majesty by very safe ways."

The King nodded. "I will go with you."

"I also will go," said **Wyndham** grimly.

This, however, the King would not permit. "If you have forgotten the limits of your parole, I have not," he said.

"I care not that for my parole!" **Wyndham** exclaimed, with a scornful snap of his finger and thumb.

Please turn to Page 38

By GEORGETTE HEYER

She thought the sea voyage might mend her broken heart — little guessing all that it really held in store for her

NOW that," stormed Julianne furiously. "is too much!"

And without further ado flung herself on to the bed and burst into tears.

But there was nobody to care. Which rather takes the edge off any howling rage. The boat was one day out on its way from England to New York and taking the long North Atlantic rollers with a slow, serene pitch that was playing the very devil with some fifty per cent. of her passengers.

Julienne was not seasick. It was much worse than that. And directly traceable to the brutal and cold-blooded influence of one Alan Reynolds.

"If, lovely lady," had said this obnoxious person, "you marry a construction engineer, you dwell according unto the dictates of the remuneration thereof. And not," he added stubbornly, "another shilling!"

From the broad settee in her little jewel-case of a flat, Julianne Brett had regarded him with hauteur. They had just come back from "Tristan and Isolda," and Julianne's white velvet cloak and shimmering gown were luscious against the royal-blue of the couch.

The sight absurdly irritated Alan, filled him with a vast and unreasoning anger, an impatience. She was so perfect, from the top of her exquisitely groomed, gleaming hair to the tip of the ridiculous little white sandal. Too expensive for him, he thought bitterly. So were the Oriental rugs, the sheen of polished wood by firelight, the grace of etchings on powder-blue walls.

His tormented mind jumped to probable corrugated iron shacks infested with mosquitoes and heat. To hands losing their soft white beauty, hair grown lustreless. The thought hurt. Impossible for him to marry a woman with money, with all this. A man had his pride. If she loved him she must wait. He was going up the ladder, he knew. There was a South American job coming up soon. whoever got it would get a Chance.

Julienne did not want to wait. She wanted him "not to be silly." She was looking at him under lashes that made him set his teeth.

AND what," she demanded, "am I supposed to do with my own money then? Melt it down for the kitchen spoons? Or medals for high and mighty bridge builders?"

He said coldly, "Certainly not spoons. Being fed out of it is rather what I'm afraid of."

"You don't consider," she asked, "it better than not being fed at all?"

So he had turned and walked out of the flat. Alan—whose arms about her turned her heart to water and whose eyes on the horizon had ever filled her with high dreams. It was incredible. So was his silence. And after a week Julianne, who had never yet made a first move towards any man, found herself swept by panic and rushed on board the first boat for New York, for no other reason except that Alan would not be there at the other end of a silent telephone. And mortally injured Martha, her maid since childhood, by absolutely refusing to take her along.

Now Julianne, unused to looking after her own belongings, had turned the cream-and-green modernistic stateroom into a sort of glorified shambles. A wardrobe trunk drawer, turned impatiently upside-down, had spilled a bottle, insecurely stoppered, over a white sports outfit. Someone had astoundingly filled the place with white and purple lilac, which always made her head ache. Martha had, quite unpardonably, managed to tuck a picture of Alan, whom she adored, into a hatbox and it had become entangled in a veil that tore



Illustrated
by
GOULD

LADY and the STOWAWAY

By Vivienne Chadwick

Alan sprang to life, and the next moment Julianne saw Monsieur Fort fall backwards.

to shreds when Julianne snatched the picture and threw it across the room.

After which she slammed the hatbox shut and broke two finger-nails right down to the quick. Which is ever, as all women understand, the final straw.

Nevertheless, one Monsieur Fort, who had handed out a large tip to be put at the same table for two with the beautiful lady, watched her descend the grand staircase, a little late but lovely, and found her poised and serene and rather more than desirable.

He said, his fine dark eyes alight, "Mademoiselle looks to-night like an inspiration!"

She laughed, not too happily. "Mademoiselle," she remarked dryly, "has just been indulging in a thumping tantrum."

He was charming and undeniably good-looking and he danced divinely. So that by eleven o'clock he had made a distinct impression and Julianne was a little ashamed of her impolitely wandering thoughts.

To the gentleman whose arms embraced her as they danced she said, winsomely, "Do forgive me for being dull, won't you? Somebody sent me a lot of lilac, and it makes my head ache."

He said, "Come for a little to the promenade deck. It's fine to-night, and there is a moon, mademoiselle, of the same dullness as yourself!"

Roberta Poole and a new man were on the deck, which annoyed Julianne, who found herself absurdly resenting the presence of anyone at all out

of her immediate past. Roberta chattered, for the benefit of this most recent acquisition, so Julianne inquired, with a certain felicity, "Why haven't we seen you before this? Seasick, darling, as usual?"

Roberta, however, had mettle. She said, sweetly, "No, darling. Merely bored. And have you heard the news? We've a stowaway, a jewel thief or something, on board. Better watch out for that little trinket you're wearing, Julie. Come along, Paddy, my sweet. I'm thirsty."

The trinket was a platinum chain, strung with diamonds like dewdrops on a blade of moonlit grass.

After a little she said good-night to M. Fort and went to the library for a book. But everything good was out and she did not want to read, anyway, so she trailed finally to her stateroom.

EVERY shred of lilac was gone. In its place bloomed some three dozen tall, pale yellow roses.

"Oh, well," said Julianne, "any Fort in a storm!" Which was pretty bad, even under the influence of a love gone awry.

At something before three a.m., restlessly switching on her light to find what made the sheet slide off the bed one way and the blankets the other, she was suddenly aware of an alien sound. She listened.

Presently she rose and put an ear to the wall beside her bed. Someone was sobbing. It sounded juvenile. Now if a child is crying in the middle of the night, audibly enough to be heard in the next room, and nobody

does anything about it, it argues that the child is probably alone. Julianne slipped into long-sleeved satin and slippers and drifted into the corridor.

A startled silence answered her knock. She knocked again. No reply. A little at a loss, she turned away. But she had been sure of the sobbing. Turning back she called discreetly up at the open transom. "I'm afraid you're in trouble, aren't you? Won't you please let me in?"

There was a pause. Then the lock slid, the door opened, and a small boy poked a snub nose, two enormous eyes fringed with a regular forest of lashes, and four hundred and fifty freckles into the corridor. The lashes were wet and the face rather white, but the eyes were defiant.

"Oh, dear," said Julianne.

Down the passage the lift growled and clicked, and the child started back. At once Julianne pushed the door wide, slipped inside, and shut it swiftly. She looked round. After her own stateroom, this one seemed astonishingly nude. There was nothing whatever to indicate occupancy except a dent in the bed. She turned back to the boy. He seemed about thirteen, and the jacket of his little, somewhat grubby suit was ripped wide at the shoulder.

"You must be the stowaway," she suggested mildly.

Up went the small chin. "Yes, I'm afraid I am," he replied politely but without contrition. A pause. "What are you going to do about it?"

"Oh, nothing," Julianne assured him hastily. "You see, it isn't any of my business, is it?"

"Not really," he agreed, a little wistfully.

"But—why were you crying?"

"I'm—I'm hungry! I brought a sandwich and some chocolate with me yesterday morning, but I was hungry then, too, so I—well, you see, I ate it!"

Julienne nodded slowly. "I've some fruit in my room. Would a couple of bananas and an orange help?"

The huge eyes darkened. "Oh, yes! Thank you very much! That is—if you're sure you can spare them?"

She smiled at him. "Come along—you'd better come in with me to eat them. You see, I can always keep people out of my room, but yours is supposed to be empty."

He surveyed her littered possessions gravely and three bananas vanished like snow on a stove. "Dear me," he said, "you aren't very tidy, are you?" He stopped. "Excuse me. I suppose that wasn't very polite."

"Well, you're quite right, I'm not. You see, I have never done any packing before, and I'm not very good at it."

STILL," he advised gravely. "I should think it would be a good idea to know how, don't you? I mean," he explained, "in case you simply have to."

Julienne smoothed her bed absently and reached for a cigarette. "Never mind about me. I think we have to talk about you. What's your name and why are you here?"

"I'm Bobbie Foster, and I'm running away from my grandmother. I've got an uncle in New York who's captain of a ship, and he'll take me with him. You see, I want to be a sailor, and my grandmother doesn't think sailors are nice."

Julienne nodded. "Well, I'll tell you," she said. "I won't say anything if you don't want me to, but if I were you I'd let them know you're here. They know there's a stowaway aboard, somebody told me so to-night, and they're sure to find you soon. Besides," she pointed out craftily, "they can't send you back just yet—and they'll feed you!"

Please turn to Page 16

FASHION PORTFOLIO

First Page

The Australian Women's Weekly

January 13, 1940

ACCENT ON WAISTS

SKIRT like an inverted champagne glass swinging gaily from a stem of a waistline. That's the current trend — and it's blissfully flattering. Necklines are high, bodices slender, skirts voluminous, and hug-me-right cummerbunds that trim your waist to your beau's handspan.



• **SMARTLY** simple green crepe frock, with shirred blue jersey swathed through deep slots to form a wide, wide waistband.

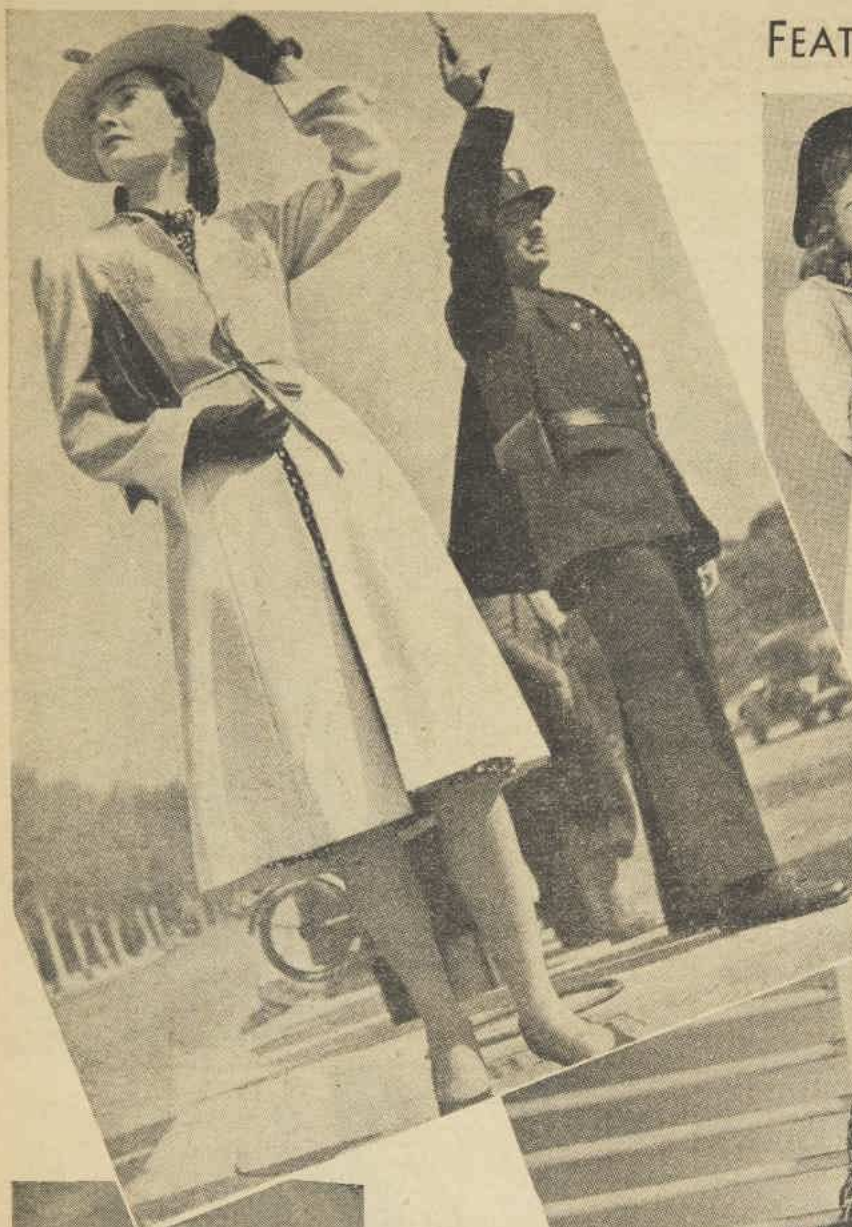
• **CYCLAMEN** draped suede corset belt conspires with a full-skirted frock of blue crepe to make your waist seem just a little bit of a one.

• **SPORTY-MINDED** yellow crepe with cummerbund of multi-colored velvet swirling round a wasp-like waist.

• **WIDE-SKIRTED** cyclamen jersey, nipped in at the waist with a cummerbund of frankly corset derivation.

RENE

FEATHERWEIGHT COATS . . .



● OVER a trim navy dress, a white sheer wool edge-to-edge coat, encrusted with white soutache braid. (Above.)

● BRUYERE designs a beige wool jersey coat with deep, unpressed pleats giving front fullness. Black halo hat to match embroidery on the collar. (Top centre.)

● NAVY-AND-WHITE ensemble with flashes of frosty white in the crepe sash and upturned panama. (Top right.)

● MAINBOCHER'S navy lightweight wool coat, opening to show a frock of white sheer, embroidered all over with tiny cut-out flowers. (Left.)

● HEAVY CREPE ensemble in cinnamon and desert sand. The tailored coat reveals a strip of the frock in front, and repeats the print in a cummerbund. (Right.)



LAST-MINUTE FASHIONS . . .

Airmailed from London by MARY ST. CLAIRE

Sketches by PETROV



1. Schiaparelli's instep-hugging suede boot caught at the back with a pert bow. The hinged wedge sole features the latest cut-out piece.

2. Rather brogue-ish pumps with uppers of leopard skin with a calf mudguard. The heel shows the new "dent-in" shaping.

3. Pluperfect boots for comfort and chic. Made of reindeer with a thin platform sole and a snug high-fitting cuff of black broadtail.

4. An Oriental note in sandals. Criss-cross ribbons tie around the ankles and are attached to wedge soles, which are supported by odd semi-circle arrangements.



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LEG ACES and pains soon vanish when Elasto is taken. Painful swollen (varicose) veins are restored to a healthy condition, skin troubles clear up, leg wounds become clean and healthy and quickly heal, piles disappear, inflammation and irritation are soothed, rheumatism simply fades away and the whole system is braced and strengthened. This is not magic, although the relief does seem magical; it is the natural result of revitalised blood and improved circulation brought about by Elasto; the tiny tablets with wonderful healing powers.

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You naturally ask—What is Elasto? This question is fully answered in an interesting booklet which explains in simple language how the Elasto acts through the blood. Your copy is free—see offer below. Suffice it to say here that Elasto is not a drug, but a vital cell-food which must be present in the blood to ensure complete health. It restores to the blood the vital elements which combine with the blood albumin to form organic elastic tissue, and thus enables Nature to restore elasticity to the broken-down and derelict fabric of veins, arteries and heart, and so to re-establish normal circulation, the real basis of sound health. Prepared in small, delicate tablets by a special process, Elasto dissolves instantly on the tongue and is absorbed directly into the blood-stream, thereby actually restoring the natural power of healing to the blood.

Every sufferer should test this wonderful new biological remedy, which quickly brings ease and comfort and restores within the

system a new health force, stimulating the growth of new, healthy tissue-cells to replace worn-out and diseased tissues, increasing vitality and bringing into full activity Nature's own powers of healing. Elasto is the pleasantest, the cheapest and the most effective remedy ever devised. For the outlay of a few shillings you can now enjoy the tremendous advantages of this modern scientific remedy which has cost thousands of pounds in perfect.

What Users of Elasto say

"No sign of varicose veins now."
"Completely healed my varicose veins."
"Rheumatoid arthritis gone: I have never felt better."
"Varicose veins quickly healed after 12 years of aching bandaging."
"Blood has hardened my Rheuma."
"Now walk long distances with ease."
"I am free from rheumatism and neuritis."
"My heart is quite sound again now."

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Simply send your name and address to ELASTO, Box 1552/E, Sydney, for your FREE copy of the interesting Elasto booklet. Or better still get a supply of Elasto (with booklet enclosed) from your chemist to-day and see for yourself what a wonderful difference Elasto makes. Obtainable from chemists and stores every where. Price 7/6, one month's supply.

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INDIVIDUAL, hand-cut patterns are obtainable for all dresses and ensembles sketched by Petrov and Rene, and all overseas fashion photos. Prices from 3/6. Send to our Pattern Department for a free self-measurement form.

5. Elaborate necklaces are important. Typical of the new lavishness is one consisting of trills of iridescent sequin baubles suspended from gold leaves linked together on a gold chain.

6. Recently launched by Paris couturiers in this necklet on the popular new "bib" lines, with fox-tail fringe in gold hanging from collar-like bars of walnut.

7. "Little girl" frock of black velvet with hem, cuffs and yoke of criss-crossed bands of cut-out velvet.

8. Black velvet mittens embroidered with hem, cuffs and yoke of criss-crossed bands of cut-out velvet, and lined with white satin.

LIPS THAT MEN

Love

TO KISS

Women the world over have learned that MICHEL LIPSTICK keeps their lips kiss-inviting. That's because MICHEL is a balanced lipstick that intensifies the natural lip color, blends perfectly with delicate skin tones, protects and keeps your mouth soft as a baby's. Michel really does triple duty. It gives your lips rapturous color, frees and protects them from chapping and parching, keeps them supple in all weathers. 7 appealing shades: Blonde, Brunette, Vivid, Raspberry, Cyclamen, Cherry, Scarlet. Price 2/- Obtainable from all Chemists and Store.



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MAKES LIPS IRRESISTIBLE



Fashion PATTERNS



F1666.—Trimly tailored style for spectator sportswear. 32 to 38 bust. Requires: 3½yds., 36ins. wide. Pattern, 1/3.

F1667.—Cool and youthful striped frock for girl 10-18 years, or 30 to 36 bust. Requires: 3½yds., 36ins. wide, and ¼yd. contrast. Pattern, 1/3.

F1668.—Draped bodice, with front fullness in the skirt. 32 to 38 bust. Requires: 4½yds., 36ins. wide. Pattern, 1/3.

F1669.—Sun frock that can be worn to tone with a contrasting blouse. 32 to 38 bust. Requires: 3yds., 36ins. wide, and 2yds. for blouse, 36ins. wide. Pattern, 1/3.

F1670.—Sophistication with slim skirt and draped bodice. 32 to 38 bust. Requires: 4½yds., 36ins. wide. Pattern, 1/3.

F1671.—Frothy blouse garnished with tucks and lace. 32 to 38 bust. Requires: 2yds., 36ins. wide. Pattern, 1/3.

F1672.—Dainty slip to go under a sheer frock. 32 to 38 bust. Requires: 2½yds., 36ins. wide. Pattern, 1/3.

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No. 2: Requires 1½yds. for blouse, and 1½yds. for pinafore, 36ins. wide.

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F1670

F1672

F1671

GOOD GIRL

WE must have been off the main highway a couple of hours before I realised it. I was half asleep, anyway. By that time it was pitch dark, and the road ahead looked about feet wide, cut into the sheer wall of a canyon. I couldn't turn the car round, so I kept on going.

After a while Joan woke up.

"Where are we?" she said.

"The way I feel," I said, "it doesn't matter much, but approximately we're between Los Angeles and

New York, and getting farther away from both every minute, by the look of it. The general idea is we're lost."

"Well," Joan said, with that lazy drawl of hers, "it's just as well for me I'm not going anywhere."

"Oh, forget it," I said.

But after her failure in the movies the poor kid wasn't going anywhere. I'd just happened to run into her in Los Angeles—she was dancing in a pretty cheap cabaret—and I was giving her a lift back East. She wouldn't let me give her anything more, even though I'd been a kind of big brother to her in the old days. That was the trouble—I could never get her to let me be anything else.

The old fire had gone out of Joan somehow. Her eyes—big and brown they were and set a little slantwise—seemed full of trouble, and when she smiled it was only half a smile, with a bitter sort of twist of her eyebrow, and there was a hard line about her mouth that I hadn't seen before.

Just the name, she was still the easiest thing to look at I'd ever seen outside a picture-book—so clean-cut, making you think of a statue or something; so slim and lithe, nothing soft or flabby about her; so—well, it made me feel pretty sick to think of what had happened to her out there.

She hadn't told me everything, only that there was a man in it, a movie director or something of the sort, and she hadn't found out what he was like before she had fallen deeply in love. I didn't want to know, anyway. I knew Joan and that was enough. I knew, too, that she'd been cut pretty deep, that she hadn't any money and no one left to turn to.

Suddenly I said:

"Why not marry me after all, Joan? I know it's not exciting. I'm forty-two and pretty fierce to look at, and you're only twenty-six on the fifth of November—it is the fifth, isn't it?—but, well, it'll be comfortable and prosperous and respectable. And I won't beat you, not often. What do you say?"

"I say, why not concentrate that powerful intellect, Bertie, on something worthy of it, like driving the car, for instance?" Joan said. "And, you may remember, we agreed not to discuss me on this trip."

"Sorry, it slipped out. Habit, I guess."



Joan leaned on the rails next to Bertie, watching the horse-man with a half smile.

"One of your worst habits, Bertie. It always was. And eating is the only habit I'm interested in at the moment!"

"The way this car is pulling," I said, "eating isn't going to be a habit. It's going to be just a suppressed desire for a long time. And we seem to have only six inches between our left wheel and eternity."

"Well, eternity is quite a way from Hollywood, and that's something."

I STOPPED the car and got out to look around. All I could see was a cliff of rock on one side of us and a gulf of darkness on the other. The rear of a river seemed to come up from down there, faintly. Then I made out a point of light a long way ahead and above us. All we could do was push on towards it.

But we hadn't crawled a hundred yards up the hill in low gear when the engine stopped with a hollow, grinding noise. I couldn't get it to turn over again.

"Well," I said, "I guess we walk."

"How unerringly your mind grasps the obvious, Bertie," Joan said. "We walked. The moon had risen now, and I could make out the bare hills dropping off straight down to the shiny, zigzag streak of a river."

I don't know how far we walked up that hill, but it must have been miles. I could imagine how Joan must be feeling in those high-heeled, satin slippers, but she didn't say anything. In the moonlight, her head thrown back, the glint on her hair, her slim silhouette against the sky—well, she looked pretty glorious. Again I wondered what was going to happen to her.

After a long while, a dog began to bark in the darkness ahead. We seemed to be on level ground now, and we came to a big wooden gate. Behind it were some buildings. We headed for the light and found a great log house, sprawling in the

moonlight. I knocked on a door, while Joan sat on the step and took off her slippers.

After a few minutes somebody opened the door and stood there holding a lamp to look at us. He seemed to be a young fellow, almost as tall as the doorway, with a blue dressing-gown and striped pyjamas.

"We're a couple of lost travellers," I said.

"And not Mickey Mouse, as you probably supposed," Joan interposed.

"Sure, come on in," the fellow said, and laughed a little shyly at Joan. I liked his voice.

Joan limped in, carrying her slippers, and we slumped down into a couple of chairs. Apparently we were in the kitchen, a vast shadowy place and littered with tables and chairs, and a stove about as big as a locomotive.

In the light I could see that the fellow who had opened the door was a youngster in his late twenties, hugely made, with a tangle of black hair, a long face, tanned like old leather, and a quick, boyish grin.

"Whom," said Joan, rubbing her feet with both hands, "have we the pleasure of barging in on in this brutal fashion?"

"O'Gallagher's my name," the youngster said and grinned again. "Michael O'Gallagher."

He didn't talk like the Wild Man of Borneo, as I'd expected, but he seemed a little embarrassed at the sight of Joan rubbing her feet and most of her stockings showing, and he colored when she smiled up at him—one of those queer, crooked little smiles of hers, with a twist of her eyebrow that would make an older man than Michael O'Gallagher feel funny.

"Allow me," I said, thinking fast, "to introduce Miss Joan Denne, the distinguished actress. And I'm her manager, Bertie Burton. We're on our way East to fill a stage engage-

ment, and our car is busted, down the road, fifty miles, more or less."

I thought I'd better make sure at the start that Michael wouldn't have any foolish notions about Joan and me. She gave me a quick look and then said to Michael: "And not as a hint, but merely as a statement of fact, we're starving, if you get the idea."

"Of course," Michael said. "I'll have something for you in two shakes."

He started to make a fire in the big stove for tea and produced a round of cold beef out of a cupboard, some bread and a couple of pies. As we ate, Michael sat on a table watching us with his head cocked on one side. He wasn't handsome; just tanned and clean-looking and lean, as if he lived in the sun and wind all the time.

After we began to feel human again, Joan said:

"Where are we, anyway? Not that it matters, but as a matter of geography."

"They call it the O'Gallagher place," Michael said, "on Little Turtle Mountain. Cattle and all that. Kind of a tough place to land into, but maybe better than nothing—when you're lost."

THE Last Great West," Joan said, and smiled at the youngster over her teacup. "Cowboys—in dressing-gowns and pyjamas—and everything, just like the pioneers. It's too divinely romantic. Young man, have you got a cigarette?"

Michael laughed and went into the next room and brought some cigarettes and lighted them for us. He looked hard at Joan as he held the match.

"Well," he said, "you folks will be wanting to go to bed, I guess. I can lend you some pyjamas, a little big, maybe, but—"

"Better than nothing—when you're lost," Joan said, and we all laughed.

"That's a nice kid," I said, after Michael had gone off to get the pyjamas.

"Think so?" Joan said.

A Complete Short Story By...

BRUCE HUTCHISON

Illustrated by FISCHER

Michael led us up a creaky stair to a narrow hall, which seemed to go on into the darkness indefinitely. He gave me a room at one end and took Joan down to the other end.

When we came downstairs in the morning a laughing, shiny-faced little Chinaman served us breakfast. The ranch hands had evidently eaten hours before.

We'd just finished our coffee when Michael rode up to the open door on a black horse. He was wearing one of those ten-gallon hats, very old and frowy, with two holes in the crown, a blue shirt, overalls and high-heeled cowboy boots.

"Well, it looks as if you are going to be guests of the O'Gallagher place for quite a while," he sang out. "Your car has broken a main bearing and we can't get another up here for about five days, the way the trains run. I've sent a team down to tow the car up here."

"That's tough—on the O'Gallagher place," Joan said, and yawned luxuriously. "But you seem strangely stoical about it."

"Strangers," Michael said, "are our rarest luxury up here."

The way he looked at Joan, I thought he meant it.

"Maybe," he said, "you'd like to look around. Can you ride?"

"Yes," Joan said. "Believe it or not, I was brought up on a farm and practically on a horse's back."

"But of course we never let her public suspect that," I said.

"Yes," Joan said, "just a good little country girl who made bad in the great city."

"As for me," I said, "I can stick on a horse if he hasn't too gifted an imagination."

So Joan rigged herself up in a white shirt, some riding breeches and boots that belonged to Michael's sister—she was married now and living in Frisco—and I put on a pair of those high-heeled cowboy shoes that made me feel pretty silly.

Michael had brought a white horse for Joan and a bay for me. She swung up into the saddle as if she'd never been off a farm. Michael held the horse and watched her, and so did half a dozen cowboys who were working around. I crawled up on my horse as well as I could.

When we got away from the house a bit we could see the O'Gallagher place laid out like a carpet.

The plateau covered fifty thousand acres, all of it belonging to the ranch, Michael said, and some two thousand of them were irrigated, a green smear against the dun-colored range. The barns lay sprawled around the big ranch house, a dozen of them, all built of squared logs, listing sideways, weathered to the color of the range, until you'd think they had grown out of the ground.

THERE was a queer feeling about it all somehow. You noticed it right away—you seemed to be away from everything, on top of everything, all alone up there, close to the sky.

"Been here long?" I said to Michael.

"Since I was born," he said, "except for a few years at school on the coast. I did two terms of medicine, and then I had to come back—no one else left in the family to save the old homestead from the sheriff."

"The last O'Gallagher," Joan said, and gave Michael a little mocking smile. "I'll race you over to that hill, Last O'Gallagher!"

She kicked her horse in the ribs and we started to gallop. I hung on to the pommel and pulled up the reins. It was pretty tough going for me, but I could still see what a picture those two kids made—Joan on her white horse, with her hair streaming in the wind, Michael beside her on his black, as straight and easy as if it were a rocking-chair.

They pulled up after a while and waited for me. Joan was laughing at the way I rode and there was a new color in her face after the gallop and a sparkle in her eyes. She looked almost as she used to look in the old days.

We had come up a little rise where we could see over the whole plateau, out to the horizon on every side. Close by stood a big pine-tree, twisted and gnarled by the wind to the shape of an umbrella. Underneath it were about a dozen mounds of hard, brown clay, with a ring of stones around each, and in the middle a big white boulder, with the one word "O'Gallagher" roughly carved into it.

"Your folks?" Joan said.

"Yes," Michael said. "It was my granddad's idea—he settled here in the 'fifties—that all the O'Gallaghers ought to be buried up here above the ranch. Most of us are."

Joan got off her horse and led it to the edge of the hill, and stood looking out across the bare, baked range and those blue peaks for a long time. Michael watched her from his saddle, curiously, his head cocked on one side. It made me remember the day we buried Joan's old dad on that hill above the farm. Just after that she went to New York to look for her first job in the chorus. I think she was remembering too.

"How about going home for some lunch?" I said.

Joan didn't say anything going home, and rode off by herself a little. Michael talked to me about his hay crop, but he couldn't keep his eyes off her.

WHEN we got back to the ranch and Michael was putting the horses into the barn I said to Joan:

"Say, have a heart, woman. When you moon over graveyards, that poor kid thinks you're an angel or something."

"Don't be so dumb," Joan said. "He probably hasn't seen a woman up here for six months, that's all."

"Well, you're not doing right by our Michael—tantalising him that way," I said. I just wanted to find out how she felt about him.

"Jealous already, Bertie?"

"What do you expect?"

"Bertie, you must be getting old. Why, he's just a nice clean boy, that's all."

"Yes, washes behind his ears every morning—and too good for the likes of you, I suppose."

"As usual, you understand perfectly," Joan said coolly, and went into the house.

It was a queer house. Grandpa O'Gallagher had built the first part of pine logs, squared with an axe and beautifully dovetailed at the corners. After him everybody had added something, until the house was an endless jumble of odd-shaped roofs and porches and balconies and twisting halls, of horsehair chairs and mighty mahogany sideboards that had come out from Ireland in the old days.

But there was more than the size and chaos of the place, though—a kind of feeling about it, of people having lived here and died. Everywhere were the marks of the broad axe and the whipsaw. The threshold of the front door was almost worn away in the middle, the same threshold that Grandpa O'Gallagher had carried his bride over in the 'fifties, when he first brought her up here—a kind of old custom, Michael said.

Grandpa O'Gallagher had left his footprints. There was a smudge on the plank wall of the living-room near the huge stone fireplace made by his candle when he used to read the Bible and Shakespeare before



As Michael mounted, the horse bucked straight up in the air.

anyone was up in the winter mornings. There were two grooves in the floor of the dining-room at the head of the table, where he had pushed his chair back, and his son and grandson after him.

Over the mantelpiece was a dim photo of Grandpa O'Gallagher and his wife, a bearded man, massive and black like a bear, and a gaunt woman, who looked a little like Michael.

What it was about the house I don't know, but you felt that all the O'Gallaghers were still there somewhere, watching you. It made you feel—well, a little cheap, as if you didn't belong among them.

In the evening Michael and Joan went riding again.

"Count me out," I said. "After that ride this morning I can hardly sit on a chair, let alone a saddle."

Michael didn't seem completely heartbroken at the news. As they galloped off together I felt about eighty years old.

I took a chair out on the little patch of grass and flowers at the side of the house, and pretty soon it got dark and I could hear the tinkle of an old mare's bell somewhere on the range, and one of the cowboys playing a mouth organ, and the stars up above the plateau seemed close enough to touch. I tell you, it was lonely up there away from everything—lonely and empty and clean.

The kids came in about ten o'clock. Joan went out and sat on the porch, while Michael put the horses into the barn. I found her looking out over the range, where the plateau seemed to end in a round rim at the stars.

"This must be love," I said. I wanted to find out, if I could, how Joan was feeling about things.

"Oh, shut up, will you!" she said. "And, after this, you come riding with us, no matter how much it hurts, understand?"

"Perfectly," I said. "So my theory is correct already — but elementary, my dear Watson, elementary."

"He hasn't said a word, smartly. Do you think a kid like that, up here, is interested in our sort?"

"Oh," I said, "too pure for our poor soiled dove, eh?"

"Try to be semi-conscious if you can—he's just a boy, I tell you, and I don't snatch cradles."

"He's about a year older than you are, ancient dame."

"Maybe, but I feel like his grand-mother. And this house—it's full of ghosts. Gives me the jitters somehow. The sooner we get out of here the better."

"I think so, too. But we can't get out for about four days, and by that time, if you don't watch out, anything might happen."

"Think so?" Joan said.

Well, they were young, and I was forty-two. You couldn't change that. The time passed quickly enough. We rode all over the ranch. After

HAPPY PEOPLE

They are the happy people who are placid in their ways.

With nothing to disturb the even tenor of their days, They never seem to worry if the rain is pouring down.

They never seem to be annoyed, to bustle or to frown.

If anything upon the stove should burn, without a sigh,

They make another something in a twinkling of an eye.

They're not at all like other folk, they're clever as can be.

For they have learnt the blessed art of sweet serenity.

—YVONNE WEBB.

dark we would sit on the edge of the plateau and look over the welter of mountains and valleys all around. It all made you feel that everything you'd done in the past was a century away, that you never wanted to go back there.

We kept busy. We pretended to help with the work. We drove down to Alkali in Michael's ancient car to get the mail, and Michael bought Joan a pair of Indian buckskin gloves, with beads all over them. We sat up on the corral fence smoking brown cigarettes that Michael would roll for us, and watched the cowboys branding calves.

When we'd come back into the

After the heartless glamor of a great city, Michael and his ranch seemed like a dream to Joan

of the stirrup, and her nose had started to bleed. Michael ran to the barn and grabbed another horse and didn't wait to put a bridle on him. Holding a halter rope, he came out of the barn bareback.

Michael dug his heels into his horse's ribs—one of his slippers had fallen off—and he was beside Oscar in a second.

"Hang on to me!" he yelled. He leaned out and grabbed Joan around the waist and pulled her off Oscar's back. Oscar went bucking down the corral.

Michael held Joan there in his arms as if she were a baby and looked down at her.

"You little fool," he said.

"You owe me four bits," Joan said, and laughed up at him.

Suddenly he leaned over and kissed her on the mouth. It looked funny—Joan dangling there above the ground, her face covered with dust and blood, and Michael in his green-striped pyjamas and one foot bare.

"Let's go back to the house," I said to the Chink. He grinned and we left them there in the corral.

That morning the parts for the car came and Michael spent most of the day fixing it. Just before dinner Joan got me alone and said:

"Bertie, I want to go riding with Michael to-night—alone."

"Well," I said, "I can't stop you. And it's all right, kid. I understand."

"Do you?" Joan said, with a funny look, and walked off.

So they went riding together and I stayed home, smoking on the porch. What chance had I in a bucking contest? Well, Joan deserved something better than a big brother like me. I'd always known really that it would go that way some day and Michael was a fine boy. She'd be safe with him and that was all that mattered. Besides, I was comfortable enough in my own fashion. I began to imagine how I'd come back to the old O'Gallagher house for a week or so every summer and watch Joan's kids growing up. It made me feel quite mellow and noble.

When they came back Michael took the horses down to the barn and Joan came over to me on the porch.

"When can we get out of here?" she said.

"Not till morning, but what's your hurry?" I said. "I judged you liked it up here by your performance in the corral this morning."

"Don't be rotten about it," she said.

"Wants to marry you, doesn't he? What's rotten about that?"

"Marry me?" Her voice was suddenly hard and dry. "Yes. He wants to marry me all right. It's all too funny. He wants to build me a new house—or anything I want!"

"Well?"

"Me! A bride! Yes, or he'll chuck the whole ranch so as I can go on with my career. My career. That's a laugh! My career!"

"I don't get you at all, Joan," I said.

"That's too bad," she said, suddenly cool again. "But it isn't really necessary. All you've got to do is get us out of here to-morrow morning—early. I told him."

"Told him what?"

"That you and I—we're going to be married."

And before I could say anything she ran upstairs.

I went to my own room and was getting ready to turn in when a horse galloped up to the porch. I heard someone talking excitedly with Michael at the door. Michael said:

"I'll phone Doc Sutton at the South Fork right away."

"What's the matter, Michael?" I said, thrusting my head out of the window.

Please turn to Page 37

An Editorial

JANUARY 13, 1940.

ALIEN DOCTRINE NOT WANTED



CLASHES between Diggers and Communists which have taken place because of insults hurled at our soldiers make us wonder if we are a little too tolerant of the Communists.

In peace time we could afford that tolerance, for really nobody in Australia took them and their objectives very seriously.

In war it is a different matter. People who preach the destruction of the Empire must expect some restriction of liberty even in a democracy which demands very little of them except that they do not make nuisances of themselves.

Communism of the Russian variety has never been a political force of any great significance in Australia.

There is not one Communist member of either a State or Federal Parliament. The noise Communists make is out of all proportion to their importance.

Decent Australians don't bother much about them until they become downright insulting—then the Reds shriek of free speech and liberty.

As Australians we can, from our own soil and ideals, build our own systems of liberty and social and political fair play.

Reds and parlor pinks who seek to import an alien doctrine into this country might first look at our own achievements.

Our Arbitration Courts, wages tribunals, our social services, old age pensions, free speech and widespread legislation for the under-privileged are solid performance and established law. WHY substitute nebulous ideals and gospels which can be changed at the whim of a dictator?

Australia offers the privileges of democracy to all those within its gates and those who have sought sanctuary here. It demands only in return an Australian outlook. Pernicious overseas doctrine should be a prohibited import.

—THE EDITOR.

"No Man's Land"

By "THE SENTINEL"

Underground farms

THOUGH the strip of land between the Maginot and Siegfried Lines has officially been a battlefield for several months, the Western Front No Man's Land still presents a gentle rural picture.

British troops who arrived last week found comfortable farmhouses to provide luxury shelter from the winter cold. Actually, the farmhouses are not as peacefully safe as they look. Guns on both sides of No Man's Land have been trained on the farmhouses, and a close watch is kept for any would-be tenants who may attempt to move in.

Cows and goats still graze in No Man's Land near the Maginot Line. They provide camouflage in the event of air attack—also milk for the French soldiers, and maybe meat later if wanted.

If the German armies advanced close to the Maginot Line the herds of cattle and goats could be driven down a ramp into the fortifications 150 feet below.

Each fortress farmyard has a herd large enough to provide meat for six months if needed.

Cosmetics to canteens

A NUMBER of well-known actresses and film stars have swapped their stage cosmetics for canteen cooking.

The glamorous Elizabeth Allen has become in a week "Our Liz" to hundreds of Tommies quartered near London because she dishes up sausages and beer with such a professional flourish.

Mrs. Clive Brook, wife of the English screen actor, is her partner in the canteen.

Grace Moore is returning to France after a brief concert tour in America to join an ambulance corps organised by American residents in Cannes. Her husband, Valentine Perera, will also drive an ambulance.

Grace Moore and her husband have already "adopted" twenty-four families in the little French town of Mougins.

Flying nurse

TWENTIETH-CENTURY version of Florence Nightingale travels by air.

Mrs. Grace Brown, an Englishwoman, aged 42, is the first woman to pilot a plane to France on active service. She flew with a consignment of blood for R.A.F. transfusions.

"Capt. Gracie," as other pilots call her, has a ten-year-old son.

A number of women are likely to give similar service during the war, piloting ambulance planes and carrying out other behind-the-lines duties.

Hundreds of Englishwomen have learned to fly through the Civil Air Guard scheme. The age limit under



THE ROAD TO BERLIN.

this scheme is 18 to 50 for both men and women, and it is possible to get an "A" licence for as little as £5.

Successful women trainees are not eligible for the R.A.F., but their services will be in demand for such jobs as "Capt. Gracie's."

War songs

"TIPPERARY" is still the most-sung song among British troops in France.

But "Heigh Ho," "I Love to Whistle," and "Roll Out the Barrel" are also given an airing.

Gracie Fields' new song, "Sing As We Go," and "You've Got to Smile as You Say Good-bye" are being taught to the French people, and she has now found another, called "Wish Me Luck."

Noel Gay, author of the "Lambeth Walk," has written for the first wartime revue in London "The Girl Who Loves a Soldier" and "Run, Rabbit, Run," which already is being sung as "Run, Hitler, Run."

Last words in topicality are "We All Sit Together in the Shelter" and "Old Tin Helmet," while for nostalgic moments there is "Don't Forget to Drop a Line to Mother."

Hats and kisses

A MILLINER friend tells me that Christmas-New Year week, usually the quietest business week in the year, has broken all sales records.

Hundreds of girls are buying new hats to wear when they say good-bye to their boy friends in the 2nd A.I.F.

"They're not choosing broad brims to hide sad faces and tears, but tiny, very becoming, ultra-feminine little hats, worn off the face to show a brave smile, and no doubt to facilitate kissing the boys good-bye," she explained.

From the Poles

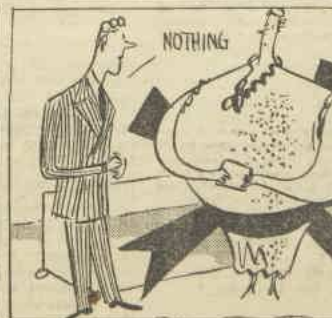
THERE are compensations, even in war.

Germany's attack on Poland will result in introducing Polish literature to English people.

The Minerva Publishing Company of Poland is now issuing books in England with the co-operation of an English publisher.

The first two are a book of verses for children by Poland's greatest living poet, Julian Tuwim, and "The Olympic Discus," a novel by Jan Parandowski, with the Olympic Games of 476 B.C. as a background.

IN AND OUT OF SOCIETY . . . By WEP



"HELP! — Rescue me from this Rest Cure!"



L. W. Lower in trouble with the Lower Kids

My heart goes out at this time of the year to parents and misguided aunts and uncles who take the kids away on holidays.

Take my word for it, it's dicing with dynamite dealing with desperadoes and leaving yourself open to a curt word from the landlady at the boarding house "to leave my house at once (or what's left of it) and take the brats with you."

I SHUDDER at every footstep in case it's someone looking for me to lay complaint No. 999 against the kids.

You suffer insults and sneers, and slink round the house like a pariah dog.

It's the very last time I'll take the kids away.

In a weak moment I decided to take them to a fishing resort.

The idea was for me to get in a little quiet fishing while the children played on the beach.

We arrived at the station two minutes before the train left.

I left the children on a seat and told them not to move while I got the tickets. When I returned they had all disappeared. I found one in the station-master's office hiding; the others had spread themselves out in different carriages, and one

By
L. W. LOWER
Australia's Foremost
Humorist

Illustrated by WEP.

wanted to ride with the engine-driver.

When we eventually got to our destination we sought a guest house where they cater especially for children—but not our kind.

They started off by sliding up and down the hallways, getting in everyone's road, making little beasts of themselves.

Mrs. Jones' little Algernon, who was there for a rest cure, was getting around with a black eye for the rest of his stay.

One dear old lady, who wanted to mother everyone's children, started off by asking little Jimmy:

"Well, my little man, what's your name?"

"Mind your own business, what's it to do with you?"

They got into the dining-room before dinner was served and cleaned up all the loaf sugar.

They were astonished at being suspected of touching it and said it was more likely to be the boy with the black eye. He looked vicious enough for anything.

There was a slight water shortage in the tanks, and the boys thought they would make it more acute by turning on all the taps so they would not have to wash themselves.

Mysterious Stranger

IN order to explain this they invented a mysterious stranger whom they had seen lurking around the tanks.

The descriptions of this stranger varied from time to time.

One minute he would be a hunchback with a club foot, and the next time he would be a tall man with a long, black beard.

Altogether there seemed to be about fifteen different strangers doing nothing but going about turning taps on.

This put Algernon on his mettle; he said he had seen all these men and a couple more, and had actually been compelled at the point of a gun to trample all the flowerbeds down at the front of the house.

The dear old lady said that the whole three of them couldn't be seeing things, and after that, of course, none of the girls would go out in the dark without an escort.

They then heard that the landlady's greyhound occasionally walked off with a shoe or slipper.

This led to a strange outbreak of crime. Burglaries were committed every day.

Heaps of all sorts of articles suddenly disappeared. The solution to this was claimed by the boys to (A) the dog, or (B) the sinister characters.

To break the tension a bit I took the kids out fishing. Well, you know how it is when the fish aren't biting.

I stretched out in the bottom of

Uncle Lennie takes a rest cure while the kids at the boarding house trample him into the ground.

the boat and pulled my hat over my eyes and dozed, and when I woke up my feet were securely tied up with fishing lines and we were about twelve miles out to sea, with the boys still rowing strongly and singing "Yo, heave ho" and "Fifteen men on the dead man's chest."

And this, mark you, is the place I

came to for a bit of rest and relaxation.

Well, they haven't murdered anybody yet but probably they are just thinking up something really good in the murder line.

It's all right being an uncle if you've got the constitution to stand it.

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TRANSPARENT SOAP

ECONOMY NOTE

There is no waste with Pears' Soap. It stays firm till it is worn to wafer thinness. The wafer, moistened, fits snugly into the hollow in a new cake and becomes part of it.



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Just follow her lead—a couple of Bile Beans nightly.



"I was worried when people remarked about my putting on weight. Yet I felt too lazy or tired for outdoor exercise. I've Bile Beans alone to thank for freeing me of this unwanted fat. My figure is now slim and girlish and I feel twice as fit."—Miss P. Gosling.

"I got rid of three pounds of excess fat per week and became lighter by two stones, through taking Bile Beans regularly. My figure is again slim and youthful, I sleep better and feel active and happy all day."—Mrs. S. A. Jewell.

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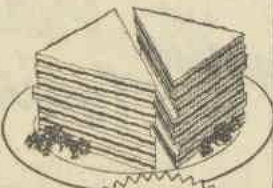
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THE AUSTRALIAN WOMEN'S
WEEKLY TRAVEL BUREAU
ST. JAMES BUILDING, ELIZABETH ST., SYDNEY

Lady and the Stowaway

Continued from Page 7

THAT last, she saw, held merit. "Well—" he pondered. She rose. "Go to sleep now, it's very late. In the morning you can decide. And you'd better undress and get under the clothes, don't you think?"

"I didn't want to mess up the bed," he told her, politely trying to stifle a yawn. "But, of course, if they know I'm here—" he got up and looked round. "I'd better help you straighten up a little, hadn't I?"

And because she saw that he wished to make some return for his providential meal, she let him pick her scattered belongings up from floor and chairback and place them neatly where it seemed to him they should be. But he was so small and so very freckled that she had to smile again. "I suppose you're not interested in diamond necklaces, are you?"

He considered that seriously. "I don't think so. Why?"

"The stowaway is supposed to be, I understood. But you don't look much like that."

He said nothing, and she decided that he was too weary to bother with the matter further.

And it wasn't until four days later that Julianne missed her necklace—a tiny, fragile thing that could be hidden in the palm with the ball of the thumb—and was worth at least six thousand pounds. It had been her mother's.

At luncheon the day after the discovery of Bobbie, Julianne said to Monsieur Fort, "The yellow roses are beautiful. They've ministered unto a battered soul."

He leaned towards her. "Then I'm forgiven for the mistake of the lilac?"

"If you'll tell me how you happened to send it to me."

"You bought your ticket in person, if you remember. I was there, and heard you ask that your name should be kept off the passenger list, so I gathered you wished no

disturbed. And at the last moment she evaded the hovering proposal and fled to her bed. Tomorrow she would be in a better humor to consider the whole thing.

But when morning came, she found herself facing the day with an unreasoning dislike. The ship bored her. There was nothing she wanted to do, and another twelve hours on end of meals and cocktails and ship life seemed utterly unsupportable. She thought, suddenly, of small Bobbie. What had happened to him?

Inquiry proved that he had given himself up and been banished to third class, pending communication with his people. Julianne was a trifle worried. She knew vaguely that there always was a third-class on these floating palaces, dim and distant below, where peculiar people ate and slept and had a strange and primitive being. And Bobbie was a well brought-up child. Perhaps he was lonely. Perhaps nobody spoke any English below. She remembered, too, the torn coat. So, a little ashamed at having allowed her own troubles to push the child so wholly from her mind, she hunted up needle and thread from the little fitted housewife in her bag.

AN imperturbable bell-boy in scarlet and brass buttons took her down to vast depths in the lift, along a corridor, and unlocked a door for her. She hesitated. Stairs loomed ahead, and suddenly there was a small crash, a yelp, and in a series of thumps Bobbie sprawled unexpectedly at her feet. He picked himself up and grinned at her, a little ruefully.

"That's the second time I've done that," he informed her. "You see, they're very steep, and I think I try to come down too fast."

"You're not hurt?"

"Oh, no, I don't think so! But I've torn my coat again. I pinned it up once, but the pins too small, I expect."

"Then I'm just in time, aren't I?" Julianne said. "I remembered about your coat, when they told me you were down here, and I thought, perhaps, you'd like me to sew it for you."

"My goodness," said Bobbie respectfully, "you're like my mother. She used to be always at the right place just when you needed her."

Julianne flushed.

"Where's your cabin?" she asked. "We'll go and see to the coat."

She sat on the little bunk and studied the coat thoughtfully. Luckily, it was only a ripped seam. She knew she would never have been equal to a thorough-going darn.

Bobbie said, somewhat apologetically, "It's not much like your room, is it?"

She paid him the courtesy of a careful survey. "No... not much like your room, is it? Real portholes, and you can see and hear the sea."

He beamed. "That's exactly it! And we've a writing-room, and movies, and a nice dining-room. And the people are friendly. There's a man who sings, and another man next door who's ill—not seasick, something else—I go in to visit him quite often, and a girl is drawing my picture. She's clever as anything. But the best part of all is the deck," he went on enthusiastically, "it's the nicest place on the whole ship, I think. I'll show you afterwards, if you like."

She nodded, concentrating on the baffling intricacies of a lining. She had to make a good job of this—as his mother would. For a few moments the child was quiet, watching her, and then, as if to pay her once more for her trouble, he slipped a harmonica from his pocket.

Softly he began to play, and to Julianne's utter surprise the lilting "Humoresque" rose in the little cabin. She raised her eyebrows, smiled, and went on sewing. He followed that in quick succession with "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot," and Grieg's "Morning," sweetly done. Julianne was enchanted.

The last note died away and there was a sudden fusillade of hand-clapping and exclamations. Julianne, lost, jumped. The doorway was thronged with people. They separated suddenly, as though blown apart by a strong wind, and a burly Italian burst into the room, teeth flashing.

Please turn to Page 18

THE BRIDE'S COLUMN

By Mary Sheraton

The New Year brings with it a new spirit... a spirit of happiness that shall prevail despite the uncertain hand of Fate. So let us go forth into this 1940 with courage and resolution, and, above all, let us remember that a smile is worth a million cares.

The old story tells us that Marriages are made in Heaven, and are the symbol of ultimate Happiness.

With this thought in mind, we look to this season's Brides for our lesson.

"When a year in age declines, Making way for newer things, The setting sun incarnadines... The whole of Nature sings."

A beautiful little verse, and one which I thought would convey the real meaning of the Spirit of the New Year.



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The Australian Women's Weekly

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GLADYS PARKER
"How can I read all the books I should when I haven't even time to read the ones I shouldn't?"

Some NEW LAUGHS



CAPTAIN: Have you cleared the deck and burnished the brass?
SEAMAN: Ay, ay, sir! And I've swept the horizon with a telescope.



BOARDER (warmly): Do you think I've lived twenty years in boarding houses for nothing?
LANDLADY (frigidly): I shouldn't be at all surprised.



BOY: How long ago did Daddy die?
MOTHER: He isn't dead, dear. He's only joined a golf club.

INDIGESTION ended!



"I was afraid to eat"

Here is proof that chronic indigestion can be overcome. Read this report, just one more of the remarkable tributes to De Witt's Antacid Powder.

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Brainwaves

A prize of 2/6 is paid for each joke used.

"GEE, Dad, there's a man in the circus who jumps on a horse's back, slips underneath, catches hold of its tail and finishes up on the horse's neck."

"That's easy. I did all that the first time I rode a horse."

HOSTESS: Dear me, the conversation is flagging. What can we do to amuse our guests?

Host: Let's leave the room and give them a chance to talk about us.

SERGEANT (addressing platoon): Any man know anything about music?

Recruit (twifly): Yes, sergeant.

Sergeant: Then you can go and shift the piano in the sergeants' mess.

"WHY is it, Mary, that whenever I come into the kitchen I find you reading?"

"It must be your rubber heels, ma'am."

"THAT fellow's too smart for me," said Smith. "He sold me a block of land that was two feet under water, and when I demanded my money back, what do you think he did? Sold me a motor boat."

AT the wedding reception, a dear old lady was gushing to the grim-faced bride, while in the background the bridegroom was obviously enjoying himself.

Dear Old Lady: I think you'll make George a good wife.

Bride: And what's more I'll make George a good husband.



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Lady and the Stowaway

Continued from Page 16

"The Carmen again, Bobbie! Like last night!" And in a moment a full-throated baritone was filling every nook and corner with liquid glory, and flowing out through the open porthole to mingle at last with the roar and wash of the wide green sea. Julianne shut her eyes. When he finished they were moist, and she was trembling. And then all at once, after that, the people seemed to grow a little uneasy at the exquisite perfection that was Julianne, and they melted away. Bobbie put on his mended coat, thanked her graciously, and led her up towards the fore deck.

"Bobbie, where did you learn to play like that?"
"My father. He was a musician."
"But why do you ever want to be a sailor, with music inside you like that?"

"I don't know. I just do. And my father always said a man has to be what he has to be, to be worth his salt. Whether it was a sailor or a musician or a groom."

Or a construction engineer. Julianne bit her lip.

The morning was hard and brilliant, the wind strong but not cold. They leaned into it, climbing over the low metal barrier and on to the platform at the very prow of the ship. Julianne stepped up beside the boy, and swift exhilaration rose in her. It was suddenly as though she were leading the vast liner herself, out into the illimitable ocean.

"Yes," she thought, "I can see why a man might have to be a sailor!"
"And now look back at the ship!" ordered Bobbie. "See? Those are the winches, for hoisting things. And look at the anchor chains—how big they are! And up there's where the officers take care of everything. Don't you think it's more fun here?"

Her hair was flying in all directions. A laughing girl lent her a kerchief. A man lent her dark glasses. Bobbie introduced a young and prideful male with an unpronounceable name whose wife had had a baby just two nights before. He insisted on Julianne's going down to see it.

"And what," coaxed Moniteur Fort at the dinner table, his tone a mingling of tenderness and reproach, "what is this so superior attraction in other parts of the ship, which leaves me desolate all the day so that I must go looking for you...?"

"Why—I don't know." She crumbled her roll, frowning a little, because inside her things seemed strangely upside down. "The time just went, that was all."

"But what do you do?" he insisted.
"Well, there's an Italian with. I think one of the most superb voices I ever heard in my life."

"Then why is he not famous—and here—where belong such things?"

"Perhaps," Julianne considered, "because he sings only for the pleasure of singing. It sounded like that."

Brief silence reduced that to unimportance. And how tell him that the mother of the new baby had been only seventeen, with stormy black hair and a raven's eyes in her darkly brilliant eyes that somehow relegated sophistication and poised and beautiful shoes to matters immaterial? It made no sense. Or that just standing for a few vivid moments with the wind from unknown worlds in her face and the mightiest element of all in dangerous beauty at her feet, had languished for the moment, the mirrors and the gift of the First Class dining-room? Nothing was changed. Ships at sea were noted for throwing one off balance for a bit. She had seen it happen to others. One returned to normal presently.

"Nothing much," she answered him lightly. "It was just new to me, that was all. Slumming, you know!" (Why, you lying little coward!)

He leaned towards her appealingly. "Julienne! You have treated me badly all day. I hope much to be recompensed this evening. Please!"

She smiled at him. If he could make her forget... "Poor deserted one! What do you want?"

His hand reached across the table to where hers lay, idling with the stem of a slender glass. "Julienne, come to my stateroom after dinner for a liqueur and a cigarette. Or," he added, pleading, as he saw the smile in her eyes change its temper, "let me come to yours, if you prefer!"

She said, coolly, "You know better than that."

What's the Answer?

Test your knowledge on these questions.

- 1.—"Ring out the old, ring in the new." That well-known New Year quotation comes from Tennyson's *Locksley Hall—The Death of the Old Year—in Memoriam—Idylls of the King*.
- 2.—To be quite correct, you should carve a leg of lamb in thin slices, starting from the middle—in thick slices, starting from the middle—in any thickness, starting from the thick end—in thick slices, starting from the thin end.
- 3.—How many United States are there? 12—16—28—34—48.
- 4.—How has the holiday weather been in Alice Springs? Of course this town is in the South Temperate zone—North Temperate zone—Tropical zone—North Frigid zone.
- 5.—Henna dye comes from a plant—a fish—an animal—a special kind of soil.
- 6.—Mitchell was the maiden name of a famous Australian singer, far better known as Clara Butt—Florence Austral—Nellie Melba—Stella Power.
- 7.—What does ordnance mean? Horse transport—a method of measuring land—a form of legislation—large military and naval guns.
- 8.—No doubt you used plenty of currants for all those Christmas cakes, but did you know that currants originally came from Constantinople—Carthage—Corinth—Corsica?
- 9.—What color is a turquoise? Grey-green—greenish-blue—pale violet—sage-blue.
- 10.—One of these is intended primarily for (a) reconnaissance work, and one for (b) breaking the enemy's resistance. Armored car—tank.

Answers on Page 20.



Illustration above—Yvonne Leach appearing in Cinesound productions and Dore Gray, Olympic champion.

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BOBBIE, in bed in his little undershirt, sat up and clasped his hands about his knees. "You're so pretty," he admired, "especially in that blue shiny stuff. Is it velvet?"

She nodded, her head bent over the woolly sock. "I'm glad you like it... I hope this won't hurt your heel. I'm not very good at it, you know."

"It'll be fine," he assured her placidly. A pause, and then, "Are you cross about something?" he wanted to know. "You're frowning."

"Am I? Then I mustn't, must I? I was only thinking."

"Does that Mr. Whatsisname bother you?" demanded the precocious infant shrewdly. "I saw he didn't like it much when we were together this afternoon. Perhaps he wants to marry you."

"I believe he does," admitted Julianne, struggling with knotted thread.

"Has he said so?" asked Bobbie with engaging curiosity.

"Ah no," he begged, "not like that! Please! You see—I never have you alone. And I wish to ask you something that means much to me."

Julienne smiled a little dryly. Well, there was only a little time left, and it is difficult to accept a man if you give him no chance to propose. But to-morrow—not tonight. To-night everything was insane and out of focus inside her. To-night she did not feel quite able or willing to cope with the thing that had blazed on this man's lips and in his eyes the other night upon the promenade.

To-morrow, after some sleep (for a change), and after she had house-cleaned her mind. Besides, she had said that she would go down to-night after Bobbie was in bed, and mend the spare socks he had washed out so meticulously and dried on the pipes. After all, a child traveling alone needed some attention, and he seemed to prefer her, possibly because she had been his first contact on board. And turned up at the right times, like his mother...

She came back to herself with a start. The man was waiting, his eager eyes probing hers. "Perhaps to-morrow night," she told him reluctantly. "To-night I'm tired."

Bobbie perched himself on the foot of the bunk. "Well, I know how it is," he agreed sympathetically, "when I had the measles it seemed an awful lot of work to clean my teeth. The brush was heavy, too."

"That's it."

There was a pause. Bobbie looked at the other doubtfully. "You don't seem exactly glad to be better," he ventured.

The long male grinned and made a fair job of it this time. "Oh yes I am, old man. Just have a few other little matters cluttering up the brain, don't you know. But I'm really very glad to be better, thank you."

"Well, that's good," said Bobbie, somewhat relieved. "You didn't have the measles, did you?"

"No, I had a silly thing called malaria, which, if you're foolish enough to give it house-room in the first place, keeps on coming back to visit you again. Like an old-maid aunt."

Please turn to Page 20

HAIR CONSCIOUS AUSTRALIANS

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Opinions Welcome

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BE TOLERANT

FEW people can discuss a difference of opinion without arguing fiercely.

"To argue fiercely is to make error a fault and truth a discourtesy." This is an adage well worth remembering.

Human nature being what it is, one person can never hope to convert another just by arguing hotly or by dismissing the other's opinions or ideas as ridiculous.

It is one thing to feel sure of a point and quite another to adopt an air of sweeping superiority.

Therefore, if we must argue, let's do so with a little less fire and a little more consideration of the other fellow's point of view.

£1 for this letter to Mrs. D. Walter, c/o 62 Eighth Ave., St. Peters, S.A.

MISTAKEN IDEAS

MANY people who would add greatly to the interest of a district's social circle exclude themselves from social life because they think entertaining would be beyond their means.

They are mistaken in thinking that to give a dinner one must serve several courses and various wines.

Experienced hostesses nowadays use originality rather than money, and their example may help to draw out the retiring people who could be so valuable socially.

Mrs. W. Gunner, 11 Dinaboola Rd., Warracknabeal, Vic.

CASUAL MOTHERS

MANY mothers of to-day fail to look after their little ones, and make their excuse the modern cry of freedom for women.

It is amazing and pathetic to find how many children are bundled off for the day to relations or friends, whilst mamma attends a committee meeting or bridge afternoon.

The mother who frantically rushes her child to the doctor because he sneezed twice is seldom the mother who will give up a night's pleasure happily for his welfare.

Instead, heavy-eyed toddlers are often robbed of half a night's slumber in their own beds by being taken out by social mothers.

Australia's greatest need at the moment is motherhood reform.

Mrs. C. J. Griffith, 22 Cramb St., East Ipswich, Qld.

TIME WASTED

WHILE waiting for service in a busy grocer's shop I noticed how the assistant raced to the far end of the shop each time the customer discovered a fresh requirement.

How much better it would be if women, especially during peak periods, prepared a neatly-written list of goods required!

With this to consult the assistant could quickly collect the goods, saving the customer's time and his own energy.

Joan Graham, 59 Bland St., Ashfield, N.S.W.

FAMILY PICTURES

WHEN visiting friends' homes, one seldom sees the family pictures that were so prevalent some few years ago. Surely this custom is not what is termed old-fashioned?

In place of these have come etchings and scenes, many of which are quite attractive, but often only persons interested in art can appreciate them.

The friendly, homely atmosphere which family groups and snaps create does seem to be lacking.

Heather Ridland, 369 Moreland Rd., West Coburg N13, Vic.

Should men sell women's dress materials?

A MOMENT'S thought would tell Miss McKay (23/12/39) why men are behind the dress-goods counters. It requires a man's strength, as some of those huge rolls of coating material must weigh at least fifty pounds!

I find the men can answer any questions about shrinkage, color-fastness, or material required.

A man will never attempt to sell you a material which does not match, but I have had girls assure me that two quite different shades of grey "tone."

It has been my experience that girls just try to make a sale, while men try to satisfy the customer.

E. Anderson, 65 Park St., St. Kilda, Vic.

Seek advice

WOMEN take a much more intelligent interest in the selling of dress goods than do men assistants.

The men may do their best to be helpful, but they can't really enjoy a little discussion as to what would be most suitable.

I like to chat over my style and fabric, so a fashion-conscious girl assistant is my choice every time.

Amy Butler, Vulture St., Sth. Brisbane.

Odd men out

PERHAPS Betty McKay has overlooked the fact that these days there are not sufficient men's jobs to go round.

The odd men out are unemployed in consequence.

Would she have the men behind the dress-length counters doing their wives' work at home, thus allowing the womenfolk to take over this so-called appropriate job?

Mrs. M. Wallis, 17 Sind Rd., Dandenong, Vic.

Patient men

SOME of the best models in dresses and hats are designed by men, who also invent new fabrics and colors, and assess prices.

Though higher salaries are paid to men than girls in the shops, many employers prefer to engage men.

I think men have much more patience than women, and are able to endure more criticism by tiresome customers.

Mrs. G. X. Amey, 25 Batman St., North Fitzroy, Vic.

Has experience

IF Betty McKay would have a good look around her city, she would find that many women have positions that should be filled by men.

I have been in a shop, and worked through every department; I found the dress materials are not so easy to lift as one would think.

As for men's choice in clothes—some men have more sense than most women!

Mrs. Cunningham, Graceville, Brisbane.



Strength is needed

Give men jobs

I ADMIT to being a reactionary. I'd like to see men serving in as many departments of the shops as possible—everything except women's dresses, underwear and cosmetics.

If women hadn't invaded so many fields of work, more men would be in a position to get married and support their womenfolk in the home.

John Hankins, Elizabeth St., Hobart.

Nicknames have their uses

IF nicknames are used, Mrs. de Heland (23/12/39), it is because there is a modern craze for fancy names which kiddies abhor. It's all just vanity of parents.

Apparently, William, Thomas, John, and so on are too trite! I think they cannot be improved upon.

A reversion to these solid old-fashioned names will soon see the end of nicknames.

E. Goode, 1 Clyde St., Parkside, S.A.

Young again

I THINK nicknames are great in a family, even for those who are grown up. They seem to bring back all the happy times of youth.

I love to meet someone who calls me by my old nickname. It makes me young again.

Mrs. B. Marne, 86 Fox St., Wagga Wagga, N.S.W.

Character tags

THE question of nicknames is a wide one. A few are very silly, and some vulgar, but many have a sentimental value or are tags of character.

Parents are often responsible for

Listen well to all childish worries

WHY is it one so often sees a wall of reserve between a mother and daughter? Theirs should be such a wonderful relationship!

Yet, on every hand we hear mothers speaking of their daughters as "problems," and saying they never have their confidence.

I think most mothers are at fault. Often, when the girl was young and seeking a confidant, her mother was too busy or too tired to bother. Later she has no confidences to give.

Take time and trouble when the children are young to understand and sympathize over their tiny worries, and you will always have their confidence.

Mrs. W. P. Wood, Tina St., Jeandessert, Qld.

the foolish ones by giving idiotic Christian names, perhaps based on battles, places, or items in the news.

Kate Kennedy, Drewry Road, North Curl Curl, N.S.W.

Do "perms" spoil charm of childhood?

AS a general rule, I would say that the short, uncurled bob is the ideal hair-do for our Australian schoolgirl, Mrs. Doyle (23/12/39).

But an exception might be made in the case of the very plain little lass



Better than "curl-rags"?

whose life is made sheer misery by gibes of "mousy" and "stringy" from more fortunate playmates.

Such children have in the past been helped to overcome their self-consciousness by means of curling irons and pins, so why not the luxury of a light "perm"?

Lillian Sutton, 76 Aigernon St., Oatley, N.S.W.

Vanity can help

IF an adult's hair can be improved by mechanical means, why not a child's?

A good "perm" is difficult to tell from natural curls, and anything is better than the old torture of sleeping in curl-rags.

I think a little vanity is a good thing. Pretty curls will help a child to learn early to take a pride in herself.

Mrs. Joan Willing, Gilbert St., Adelaide.

Charm lost

I AGREE heartily that it is perfectly ridiculous to see children with permanent waves.

It makes them vain and conceited and removes all traces of the sweet naturalness that is so charming in youngsters.

But don't blame the children—blame the parents.

Miss D. E. Grahame, Watkin St., Bexley, N.S.W.

Prefers plaits

PERMANENT waving is just one of the many ways in which foolishly vain mothers of to-day deck out their children.

When I had small daughters they were dressed simply, with no thought of drawing attention to their looks. Their hair was done in sensible plaits.

What sort of women will be dress-conscious tots of to-day become?

Mrs. Tom Spencer, Hay St., Perth.

OVER-PROTECTION

I DO not think it is good for parents to conceal all domestic and financial difficulties from growing children.

Girls and boys in their teens should be told enough to give them an idea of the effort required for a father to maintain a household and a mother to run it.

Children who are always protected from disagreeable facts usually grow up to be selfish and unfit to meet the problems of life when that protection is gone.

Mrs. D. Coulter, 93 Merriwa St., Nedlands, W.A.

LAZY CAR-OWNERS

THE rising price of petrol might result in benefit to the general health of the community.

In normal times, many people prefer to "get the car out" rather than walk, however small the distance to be covered.

Half the ills of the world come from lack of exercise, yet all can enjoy natural, easy, free exercise by walking.

S. C. Wilmington, Box 36, P.O., Bundaberg, Qld.

LOVE OF SPEED

WHY do the young people of this generation attach so much importance to speed?

Progress in many departments of life has decreed that everyone must be alert to prosper. We can understand this, but the senseless desire for excessive speed, which every week-end adds several names to the long list of road deaths, is quite another matter.

The number of young girls who are killed while pillion riding is appalling.

It certainly is a pity to see promising youth being sacrificed to the "God of Speed."

Mrs. J. Wilson, 307 Angus St., Adelaide.

PLACE OF HONOR

WHICH should come first in a woman's life—her home, her parents, her children, or her husband?

The home may occupy much time, but without husband or children it would be worthless.

After marriage many of us unconsciously drift from our parents, who seem a little in the background.

Even the children fall into second place when one remembers the attention due to the wage-earner and his goodness to you.

So, in my case, it is husband first, Mrs. R. de Holland, 32 Royal Pde., South Pascoe Vale, Vic.

Lady and the Stowaway

Continued from Page 18

"Oh yes, I've heard of that. You get it in the tropics, don't you?"

"That's it. I found mine loose in Africa."

"Oh. What were you doing there?"

"Well, I was building a bridge over a particularly sloppy and pestiferous river. And now I'm going to South America to build another one, and I'm hoping they've been considerate enough to pick me a more exclusive and better-behaved—I say, what's the matter? Am I turning black, or something?"

"Oh, no! Excuse me for staring," apologized Bobbie hastily, "but you see I've been wondering all along where I could have seen you before. And now you've shaved I remember. There's a lady upstairs has a picture of you in her cabin!"

The steady grey eyes regarded him humorously. "Now then, Robert! You've been swilling too many ginger beers at the bar! I'm not the sort of bunny whose picture ladies keep. Besides, I don't know any ladies."

"Well, this one knows you then," maintained Bobbie stoutly. "Cause I picked it up off the floor myself, when she'd got her room in a mess. In a shiny dark leather case."

There was a silence. "What," asked the man quietly, "is the lady like, Bob?"

"Oh, she's pretty. Sort of tall, with nice shiny hair and eyes that kind of go different colors when she's sad or happy. And the longest lashes I ever saw. Longer even than mine," he added naively.

"Oh Heaven!" said Alan Reynolds. He looked unseeing out through his porthole, and his mouth was taut with the sick, bitter

yearning he had known for two weeks.

"What's her name?" he demanded abruptly.

"Why I—I don't know. She never said."

Alan's eyes returned to the porthole. "It could be," he mused. And then, to himself, "and I almost missed the boat, telephoning—again and again—"

The child was silent, wide-eyed. And after a while Alan said, "She's the lady you told me about, Bob? Who mended your things and helped the foreign girl with her new baby? And cried when the Italian sang?" The boy nodded. Alan shook his head in slow wonder. "No. It couldn't be. But . . . if it only were . . . look, old man, think you could wangle her down here again to-night? So a fellow could sneak a look-see? Because, somehow—"

Bobbie was dubious. "Well, I don't know. She said something about being busy to-night."

"Then I'll go up there," decided Alan grimly. "If I have to make it in a wheel-chair. We won't bother any stewards to unlock the doors, we'll go through the kitchens and you shall show me her stateroom."

It was ten-thirty. Alan followed Bob down the first-class corridor, slowly, a hand now and again to the walls, for he was weak and shaky. They turned a corner, and ahead of them a door was just closing. Bobbie swung round.

"There she is now," he said, "she's just gone in. I'll sit on the stairs and wait," he added, "in case you get lost going back, or anything."

Alan hardly heard him. At the

door he paused to pull himself together. He knocked, briefly, and then, because he could not bear the thought of Julianne's opening it, only to close it again instantly, leaving him forever bereft, he turned the handle himself. After all, if the whole thing was a mistake one could always retire with a graceful apology. He stepped inside.

AT the far end of the room a man was bending over as though searching for something. He straightened like a shot, whirling to face the door. There was a moment's electrical silence.

"I beg your pardon," said Alan courteously. "I understood this was Miss Brett's room."

"It is," replied the other suavely. "May I ask to what we are indebted for the honor of this visit?"

We! Nausea rose in Alan numbing as ether. He said, white to the lips, making a stand, a desperate stand. "I had private business with Miss Brett. I should be grateful for your withdrawal."

Monsieur Fort raised his eyebrows. "You have perhaps," he countered, "an appointment with Miss Brett? The lady—ah—expects you?"

"That," said Alan slowly, "is hardly a matter of interest to you, I think."

"Ah," said Monsieur Fort with deep meaning. "Then I think it is I who must request the withdrawal. A request," he added politely, "based, you will understand, on the advantage I enjoy by reason of the per-

sonal invitation which accounts for my presence in this room."

At his side Alan's fists clenched slowly. He did not move. The silken, luxurious room was suddenly vibrant with unleashed currents, primitive and savage.

The door opened, and Julianne stood before them.

Alan saw her eyes widen, heard the little sound of her swiftly withdrawn breath. Her glance held his for a maddening, unfathomable instant . . . and swung to the immaculate gentleman in evening garb. "I was unaware," she said, "that I was entertaining so—extensively—this evening."

The infinitesimal breath of relief Monsieur Fort loosed was imperceptible, but he could not resist the swift look of triumph he flung at the tall, white-faced man in the grey tweeds. It stung.

"I am sure," Alan said slowly, and his voice grated, "that either one of us will be—delighted—to relieve you of his presence. As you prefer." If she wanted that polished pup, she could have him. Had he not already

The answer is—

1. In Memoriam.
2. In thick slices, starting from the middle.
3. Forty-eight.
4. South Temperate zone.
5. A plant.
6. Nellie Melba.
7. Large military and naval guns.
8. Corinth.
9. Greenish-blue.
10. Armored car (a); tank (b).

Questions on Page 18.

left her once to her toys? And he had been a fool to think . . .

"I think," said Julianne, and now, if Alan had not been so shaken with fever and fury and disappointment, he might have heard her voice tremble. "I think, that as you are both here without the formality of an invitation . . ." She paused, partly for self-control, but got no further.

ALAN sprang to life, took two furious strides across the room. There was a smart crack, and Monsieur Fort staggered back against the wall, his hand to his reddening jaw. Then an impolite French phrase escaped him, and he leaped forward.

"Not!" snapped Julianne. "This is my room, if you please!"

He stopped. With some alacrity. There was, after all, something about those tired shoulders . . . He bowed. "If," he said coldly, "the gentleman will do me the honor—at a later date—" He glanced at his watch, a gesture instinctive, involuntary, innocent. But fatal. An exclamation from Julianne froze his first step towards the door.

"Monsieur," she said clearly, "will you permit me to look at your watch, please?"

It was astonishing the effect this simple request had upon the man. His face went the color of wet clay, his throat worked convulsively and all his body seemed to shrink. Alan stared. Julianne's mouth twisted. It was unpleasant, at that instant, to remember that this man had held her in his arms. Had kissed her in a way that now brought the color in a vivid flame to her face.

"Yes," she told him slowly. "I thought so. You would have done better, Monsieur Fort—if that is your name—to jettison that very expensive watch than to have risked coming back to find the glass you dropped last night, when I was below. I found it this morning . . . when I was looking for my diamonds." She paused. Her eyes, wide and luminous and appealing, now slipped for an instant to the puzzled eyes of Alan. "Because," she added, "I am in a mood to be generous. I offer you—I permit you—to make an even trade. Your watch glass for my diamonds. Shall we say in five minutes?"

Without a word he bowed and left the room.

Alan drew a long breath. "Things," he remarked, "appear to be a trifle complicated. However, for the moment we will let that go. Would you mind telling me what you're doing on this ship?"

"Running away," she stated simply.

HE took out a cigarette. "From me," he queried, studying it, "or from yourself?"

"From both," she told him. Her voice broke suddenly. "Alan—"

And instantly his arms closed about her.

"Darling! I phoned and phoned! I had a wire—not five hours before the ship sailed. I have the South American job! It's big, Julianne!"

She clung to him. "I've been waiting you till I was so ill I could die! Where have you been?"

"Down with a touch of malaria. In the third class." He looked at her sharply. "I warned you, you know! Third class, and a cargo boat from New York on!"

"A cargo boat?" He nodded. "Could I—I mean, would you—would you mind if I—just came along?" And then, in a rush, before he could reply, "Oh, darling, I'm sorry I was such a pig! If you'll take me and love me . . ."

Softly he put his hand across her mouth. Her lips caressed it. "I was stubborn too. Of course you shall use your money for anything in the world in reason, to help you to be comfortable. And now tell me about your perturbed prowler, the liar! What is this about watches and diamonds?"

She told him, not without guilt, briefly. He nodded. "I know him now. I've read about him and seen his pictures. His trick is to get the lady with the gems a little—shall we say, completely—pie-eyed, in her own room. Late. Help to prevent them making a fuss the next day, d'you see? And I believe he's not above doctoring the drinks. In this case he seems to have preferred to work in your absence!"

She was silent a moment, remembering her mistaken estimate of Monsieur Fort's plans. He was not quite sure of me, she thought, so he took them last night—and sent me to keep an engagement with him in the cocktail lounge, miles away, so that he could come and hunt for his watch glass.

Alan was continuing, with considerable severity. "But I'm surprised you have been so foolish, Julianne! You should know what you lay yourself open to, if you permit strange men to visit you in your room, at all hours—"

There was a small sound. Bobbie, forgotten, stood in the still open doorway. Penitently Julianne stretched out a hand to him. For a moment, this morning, remembering his silence under her teasing, and his help with her littered stateroom, she had thought . . .

But the gross injustice of Alan's scolding was occupying his small mind. "But he wasn't—she didn't—" He stopped abruptly at her swift, shining, mischievous look.

"You hear me, Julianne!"

Deliberately she let one eyelid flick—the one away from Alan.

"Yes, darling!" said Julianne meekly to her future lord.

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Real Life Stories

Strange drama of revenge

for tribal law breach

Lubra victim of superstition

LIVING at Marree, in the north of South Australia, I saw at first hand the workings of the bone-pointing custom of the blacks.

For a few coppers and some tucker the black gins would do all the hardest housework, scrubbing and washing.

My housemaid was a bright-eyed, bright-faced young gin called Mary Ann. She was very good-looking as aboriginal women go. Always laughing and full of mischief, she was the life of the party of gins who tramped the four miles from their camp to the town on work days.

Mary Ann was very much in love with a dashing young black boy called Willie, who was employed as a stockman on a nearby cattle station. But the elders of the tribe picked out another husband for her, whom she refused.

Their vengeance was swift and sure.

One morning Mary Ann did not report for duty, and I was told she was ill back at the camp. I had become very fond of my happy bright-eyed maid, so I visited the camp to see what was the matter.

When she told me the elders had "sung" her, I laughed. But I soon realised this was no laughing matter. The knowledge of her doom was plainly written on her terror-stricken face.

She broken-heartedly muttered: "Yes, missus, me bin 'sung' all right, soon tumble down (die) now."

The bone-pointing ceremony is usually performed at full moon, and



SHE TOLD ME: "Me bin 'sung' all right, soon die now" . . .

by the next full moon the victim is usually dead.

A cut is made on the body of the victim so that the potent black magic might more easily enter.

The act of pointing the bone and the accompanying corroboree are merely a theatrical show having a deep psychological effect on the intended victim.

The apparatus consists of a bone, to which are attached, by a long length of human hair, a set of eagle's claws. Curses are sung into the bone. Aborigines believe they are then transmitted to the body of the victim.

In vain I pleaded with Mary Ann and tried to talk her out of her

foolish beliefs. I took her dainties of all kinds, but she gradually sank.

I even took the local doctor. But the white man's skill and medicine were of no avail against the inherited superstition of centuries.

Mary Ann became gradually worse. She told me she could feel the eagle's claws in her kidneys, and bones piercing her chest and heart.

My happy black maid never returned to work for her mistress. By next full moon she had passed away and the camp was broken up. All the natives had gone on a "walk about."

11/1/- to Mrs. Margaret Harding, Hughes St., Mile End, S.A.

Short and Snappy

ICE-CREAM WAS COLD!

DURING a heat-wave I shared a table with two men, evidently strangers to a city. I ordered ice-cream and fruit salad while they finished a hot roast and vegetables. One of the men told the waitress he would not mind having the same as I was eating. It was evidently a delicacy that he had not tasted before.

After tasting it, he said to his friend, "Don't order any of this stuff, Bill. It's stone cold." He called the waitress and said, "The pudding was very nice, but do you think it could be warmed up a little?"

10/6 to Miss Davidson, c/o Mrs. Lukeman, Fernhill St., Horsham Park, N.S.W.

DOUBLE DISLOCATION

A FRIEND of mine, pulling grotesque faces to amuse his children, dislocated his jaw. He rode eight miles on his bicycle to a doctor. On the way back he met a friend, demonstrated what had happened, and dislocated the jaw again. He had to return to the doctor. In all, he rode 32 miles.

2/6 to B. J. Griffiths, Gregory Tee, Brisbane.

RETURNED THANKS

MY small son had just reached the age when he could memorise small poems and nursery rhymes. One of his favorites started: "Thank you pretty cow that made pleasant milk to sork my bread."

One day when we were on a tram

an elderly lady, a stranger, offered him a sweet. As he took it, I murmured, "Say, thank you." He looked up in her face and said, "Thank you, pretty cow!"

2/6 to Mrs. D. Metcalf, Walbundry Ave., Nth. Balwyn E9, Vic.

FLYING MONEY

DURING a windstorm one of our leading business men was crossing the street to the bank when his bank pass-book, containing £215 in notes, was blown from under his arm. The money was scattered in all directions, some flying as far as 300 yards along the main streets of the town.

Willing helpers soon began collecting it down drains and along gutters. Every penny was retrieved. Men and boys could be seen collecting it in handfuls.

2/6 to G. Crawford, Flint St., Forbes, N.S.W.

SEND IN YOUR REAL LIFE AND "SNAPPY" STORIES

ONE guinea is paid for the best Real Life Story each week. For the best item published under the heading "Short and Snappy" we pay 10/6. Prizes of 2/6 are given for other items published.

Real Life Stories may be exciting or tragic, but must be AUTHENTIC. Anecdotes describing amusing or unusual incidents are eligible for the "Short and Snappy" column. Full address at top of Page 3.

In fumigated room

ONE of the nurses at the country hospital where I had just commenced training developed scarlet fever, and immediately on her removal to isolation the room in which she and I slept was sealed for fumigation.

Wishing to recover my watch which I had left on the table, I waited for an opportunity to escape from my work and went up stairs for it. I knew I should not enter a room under fumigation, but my watch was rather precious, and I was afraid of the metal becoming tarnished.

The door was tightly closed with newspaper to prevent the fumes escaping. I carefully opened it, and leaving the door slightly ajar I picked up the watch, and was about to return when I heard the matron's footstep on the stair.

Pausing before my door the matron pulled it closed, but luckily did not turn the key. She went to her own room and I knew she would see me if I came out.

Feeling half suffocated I tiptoed to a window which overlooked a small courtyard, raised the sash a little, and stuck out my head to take in a big deep breath of fresh air. There I remained till some time later I heard matron go downstairs.

2/6 to K. Looney, Nundle, N.S.W.

Indian adventure

WHILE in India I lived for some months during the summer with my children at Almora, on the foothills of the Himalayas, eighty miles from the railway terminus.

The journey to the station was accomplished by motor lorry. The roads were good but narrow, and wound round the hills. Often you could look down and see the road you had just traversed.

I left Almora at 8 o'clock, one morning with my three children to meet my husband at the rail terminus. The lorry was full of luggage and sacks at the back with Indians perched on top.

Two seats across the lorry in front held myself and three children, aged five, three, and a baby, another European woman, her husband and two children, besides two Indians.

We had not gone far when the lorry ran into the bank. A little farther on it was just stopped on the edge of the road, with a sheer drop of hundreds of feet. The driver said: "I can't help it, there is something wrong with the steering. I can only turn one way."

The other woman kept saying to her husband, "We will all be killed. It's the thirteenth, I told you we should not have come to-day."

We reached the terminus at eight o'clock. My husband was very worried. He had been there since 6 a.m.

2/6 to Mrs. F. L. Nunn, Newstead, Vic.

DO YOU KNOW?

CHINESE CONJURING TRICK

CURES TOOTHACHE!

ANCIENT CHINESE DENTISTS PROPOSED TO CURE TOOTHACHE BY REMOVING A WORM FROM THE TEETH. TO MAKE SURE THE WORM WAS FORTHCOMING, THEY SECRETED A SCRAP OF PAPER UNDER THEIR NAILS AND DROPPED IT IN THE PATIENT'S MOUTH. TOOTHACHE IS A SURE SIGN OF DENTAL DECAY. GUARD AGAINST DECAY BY USING KOLYNOS—IT CLEANS YOUR TEETH SURGICALLY.

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KOLYNOS BURSTS INTO MILLIONS OF ANTISEPTIC BUBBLES. THESE SURGE BETWEEN TEETH AND REMOVE FOOD DEPOSITS WHICH CAUSE BACTERIAL MOUTH. YOUR TEETH SPARKLE WITH NEW LUSTRE AFTER KOLYNOS. KOLYNOS LASTS TWICE AS LONG AS ORDINARY DENTAL CREAMS. TOO, YOU NEED ONLY 1/2 ON DRY BRUSH.

KOLYNOS DENTAL CREAM

1/3 and 2/6

The Case of Mrs. MARY W.

CASE: No. 17908
NAME: Mrs. Mary Ann W. Age: 37
OCCUPATION: Housewife.
SYMPTOMS: Chronic constipation, flatulency, no energy for domestic tasks, dull and listless, irregular bowel action, no appetite, easily irritated.
DIAGNOSIS: Constipation, accumulated waste-water clogging the system, sapping energy, upsetting digestion.
TREATMENT: NESTLE'S BOWEL REGULATOR.
ACTION: IMMEDIATELY WITH NYAL FIGSEN.

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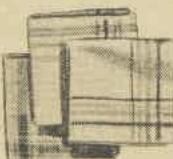
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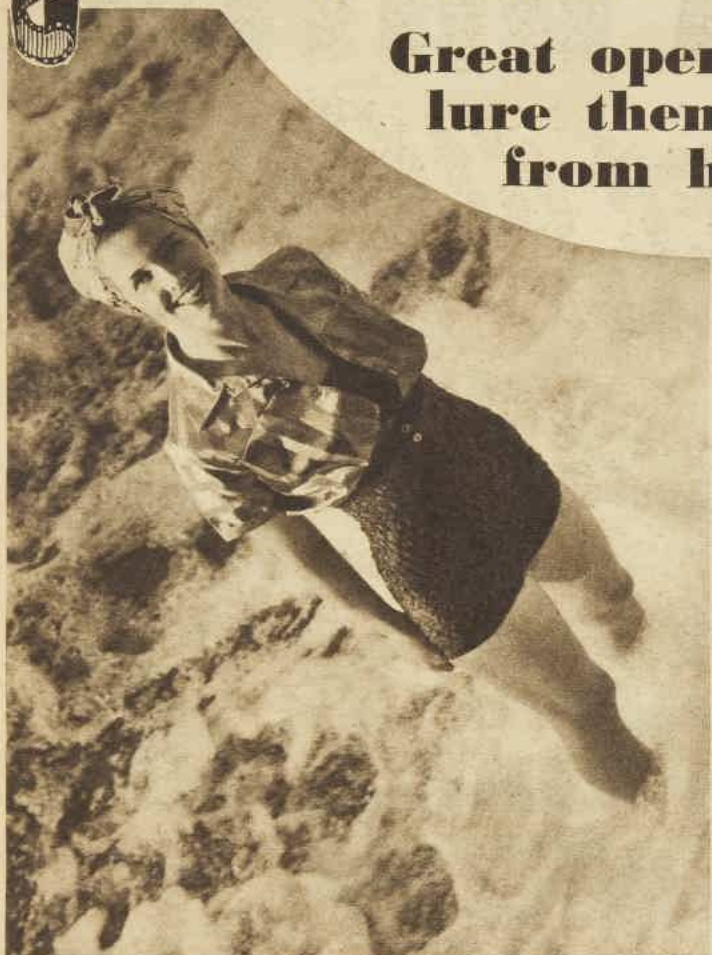
The Movie World

January 13, 1940

The Australian Women's Weekly Special Film Supplement

First Page

Great open spaces lure them away from home



1940 Bathing girl. Mary Howard, New York actress, of RKO's "Abe Lincoln in Illinois," snapped in the surf at Malibu.



1840 Paddling belle. Mary relaxes while on location on Oregon's Mackenzie River, for "Abe Lincoln in Illinois," RKO's drama of American history.

WINTER in Hollywood SUMMER on location

MIRIAM HOPKINS SENDS SOS OUT OF DESERT CAMP IN ARIZONA

HOLLYWOOD is having a winter weather. Mischa Auer has won the laugh of the week by ringing up Sonja Henie to swear that the swimming-pool is frozen and would she like to come over?

But there's enough suntan on our glamor girls to make the atmosphere really tropical. Reason? Those location trips, north, south, east, and west.

Miriam Hopkins is at the moment out on the desert beyond Flagstaff, Arizona. She sent an S O S to a film-colony girl friend this week for more beauty creams.

Like so many stars, Miriam's cosmetics are made up according to her own pet formula. But, unlike so many stars, Miriam has the sensitive skin which goes with blonde hair—and she is playing a hardy pioneer girl, in that hot desert country, in "Virginia City," with Errol Flynn.

Desert location trips are real work for the actresses and a transport problem for the studio.

When the "Virginia City" outfit left Hollywood it comprised sixteen five-ton trucks, sixteen passenger motor cars, four 50-passenger buses, three trailers, forty-eight horses—and then a special nine-carriage train.

The two hundred people in the crew included Miriam's own hair-

dresser, wardrobe woman, and make-up man. But Miriam herself is a grand trouper. She had a great time.

A fine time was had, too, by newcomer Mary Howard, when she went up into the Oregon forests for "Abe Lincoln in Illinois." Mary was enchanted with the camp life, the great river, the tall pines, the sunshine, and, above all, with the fresh air!

Mary is a New York stage actress—and to be paid for working in the great outdoors was her idea of heaven.

Mary's studio had a nice time, too. The actress' complete film wardrobe

By JOAN MCLEOD
from Hollywood

consisted of seven cotton washing dresses, carried in one small suitcase.

But I mustn't give you the idea that all is fun for the glamor girl and her studio in the wide, open spaces.

Sometimes the worried frown belongs to the girl. Tiny Lily Pons, on a desert trip for her last picture, had to spend all her time between takes in a special air-conditioned dressing-room! The sun was so hot, and Miss Pons got so hot, too, that the studio thought she might have to cancel the whole trip.

LOVE ON LOCATION

TALK of location trips to Virginia Bruce and her lovely eyes glow. Wasn't it on her one and only Western chore that she and director Walter Ruben fell in love? "The moon over those hills!" exclaims Virginia, who still looks upon that film, "Bad Man of Brimstone," as her best. Well, wouldn't she? She is Mrs. Ruben.

Sometimes the studio gets the problem. Claudette Colbert is an intelligent, even-tempered beauty, who is prepared for most inconveniences in connection with her work. But Claudette flatly balked at washing and bathing in a mountain spring for the whole of the time that "Drums Along the Mohawk" beat up a location month or so in those Utah wilds.

Claudette said she must have a bath—and one with running hot and cold water had to be provided. Certainly the bath was rubber, not porcelain. But then that particular location unit was the bare 40 miles away from town plumbing!

Certainly, the girls do prefer trips nearer home—especially when a glowing tribute is thrown in.

Ginger Rogers, for instance, has just gone down to a farm in Monterey, Southern California, where she will do outdoor scenes for "Primrose Path." And the farmer has refused to charge any rent for his property. Reward enough, he stated, was being allowed to watch Ginger at work!

*White is right—
if it's
Luxable*

Background of a successful summer wardrobe...a crisply tailored suit of white shark-skin (or if you prefer it, pique or linen). But do Lux it often, because Luxing's quick and easy...and that "out of the handbox" freshness is so important!

IF IT'S SAFE IN WATER—IT'S SAFE IN LUX

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DANCING DOWN THE YEARS



● Eleanor Powell and Fred Astaire rehearse against the spectacular background of "Begin the Beguine."

Astaire to retire at 40

By CHRISTINE WEBB
from Hollywood

ONLY three more years of screen dancing are planned by Fred Astaire. And then?

"Then, I hope to become a producer of dance films," said Fred. "I can sit on a chair with my feet up, and see that other people's feet do the work."

As Fred spoke—we were sitting on the set of "Broadway Melody of 1940"—he cocked one quizzical eyebrow at his shoes.

"Look at them," said Fred. "I spend £3 or £4 on shoes to dance in—and each pair lasts a week at the longest. But I don't think I'm extravagant."

"Although I have been dancing since I was five—and I am now thirty-seven—I have never had to worry about my feet. In thirty-two years of dancing they must have become pretty well educated; and sometimes, I swear, they think independently of me."

Fred, who is much taller than he looks, and much thinner, relaxed in his chair with that crooked smile of his. I had just spent ten minutes trying to get his opinion of Eleanor Powell as a partner—in contrast to Ginger Rogers.

I had wanted intimate, and, yes, impertinently personal stuff, if you like. But Fred Astaire wasn't having any. He talked with equal charm about "Miss Rogers" and "Miss Powell"—he never uses their Christian names. He and Ginger—

sorry, Miss Rogers—are extremely good friends.

But that saucy, gossip talk which is so common round the studios never passes Fred's very firm lips.

On the other hand, he will talk dancing—the stage variety—until the pencil drops from his interviewer's hand. You wouldn't think that a passion for dancing—the stage variety—could last 32 years. But then, you haven't listened to Fred.

Before camera work actually began on "Broadway Melody of 1940," he and Eleanor Powell re-

were groups of the chorus girls who made a background for "Begin the Beguine." I loved their silver lame pleated skirts and green-embroidered silver boleros. But the dancers themselves looked pretty tired; they had been rehearsing the number all morning.

Eleanor Powell herself was not, in sight; she had retired to her dressing-room to rest. Being Fred's dancing partner is no easy job—as Eleanor had previously admitted.

But, anyhow, I was there to talk to Mr. Astaire—whose feet were, by now, tapping out a new rhythm, absent-mindedly, on the floor. They gave me an idea.

"Do you go out dancing much—ballroom dancing, I mean?"

"Not if I can dodge it," hastily answered Mr. Astaire. "I hate it."

"Anyhow, I am a big disappointment on the dance floor. I just walk round."

The only time I had actually seen Fred night-club dancing—with his wife—it had looked perfection to me. But he won't admit it.

He is a curious fellow, this famous Astaire. When an interviewer comes down to personalities he retires into his polite shell. His home life is that of the average, successful American. His wife is the former Mrs. Phyllis Baker Livingstone Potter, a society divorcee. They have a 3-year-old son, Fred, jun., who is a chip off the old block. The child has the same graceful dignity and reserve that characterise his father.

But Fred was speaking to me—apologies for hurrying away. The MGM set was crowding into orderly confusion, the band tuning up. Another rehearsal for "Begin the Beguine"—so, reluctantly, very reluctantly, I had to take my leave.

FRED WEARS OUT A PAIR OF SHOES EACH WEEK

heard eight hours a day for nine weeks.

Sounds excessive? Well, one number in the musical—"Begin the Beguine"—is the most elaborate dance sequence ever screened.

As I listened to Fred I faced the colossal set used for the "Beguine"—and I do mean colossal. Its huge, semi-circular sweep featured mirror walls and floor, a midnight-blue cyclorama in which 10,000 cellophane lights twinkled like stars and cellophane palm trees reflected in the glass panels to infinity.

"Miss Powell and I broke some glass squares on the floor during one rehearsal," said Fred reflectively. "That was the only damage!"

Over on the corner of the set

PRISCILLA
LANE
Warner Bros.
Player.

WHY STARS SHAMPOO THEIR OWN HAIR

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Colinated Shampoo



● Just two of Hollywood's bachelor girls who are having plenty of fun taking their holidays the American way—not too far from home. Wendy Barrie and Lucille Ball, who both work hard for RKO studio, find gentle relaxation playing croquet.

Change of plans for movie holiday-makers

FOREIGN TOURS ARE TABOO, SO FILM PLAYERS ARE DISCOVERING AMERICA

From JOHN B. DAVIES, in New York

THIS year Hollywood stars are spending their holidays the American way—right in their own country.

Hawaii and the South Seas may still be calling, but the stars are no longer answering.

You don't see any of those colorful catalogues advertising sunny trips on foreign shores lying around in Hollywood homes any more. You see road maps.

It's a matter of necessity, of course. Even if a player wanted to venture across the Atlantic—or the Pacific—his studio would forbid it.

But the players don't care. They're having a grand time getting acquainted with their own country... taking their vacations and a refresher course on home beauty-spots at the same time.

When gayer times are preferred they get their change of scenery among New York's millions, seeing Broadway and night life along the east coast.

The Don Ameches, for instance, had hoped for a grand tour of Europe for their holiday this year.

But now they're taking it easy instead at local watering spots... and very happy about it.

After a few weeks' sun and leisure at Grant's Lake they have moved in closer to Palm Springs for a little more social life.

Don was pushed off for a rest cure by the doctor. When European plans went awry, the actor just couldn't

be bothered to pull out of his working stride for a local vacation.

He worked six days a week making pictures, then spent Sunday broadcasting.

But Don is now blooming with health and bronzed by the sun, and doesn't regret his change of plans.

Next vacation Don is taking the family south to Mexico, on the recommendation of his very good friend Tyrone Power.

Tyrone spent several idyllic

months in Mexico last year. That's where he first got to know his wife, Annabella. So who could wonder at his enthusiasm for that country?

The Powers, incidentally, won't be going far afield for their vacation this year. They're off to an island off Mazatlan.

Robert Taylor and Barbara Stanwyck are another young couple who are not sorry they couldn't go on that European trip.

Barbara sadly brought out her American models from their tissue wrappings and tore up the list of places she wanted to see.

Bob cabled regrets to invitations issued by those many friends he made in England when he was last over there to make "A Yank at Oxford."

But now they're happily rolling along country roads making a leisurely trip across America to New York.

They're off to look at the latest

Broadway plays, and seeing America first.

Says Bob: "You don't need any passport to drive through the redwoods. We won't have to exchange moneys, either, to take a look at a waterfall."

"There's nothing like a holiday where you don't have to dress up, and can do just as you please."

Bob and Barbara are going to spend two weeks in the big town. Mrs. Taylor means to buy herself a trunkload of new clothes—if she can manage to dodge enthusiastic New York shoppers.

Hollywood's bachelor girls are taking kindly to holiday restrictions.

If ever Wendy Barrie cherished notions of a grand tour she's put them from her gladly. Right at this minute she's planning a fishing trip to Coronada.

Lucille Ball once wanted to go to romantic Honolulu. Now she's quite satisfied to see the salmon ski up the Columbia.

Olivia de Havilland, who always likes plenty of life and gaiety around her, takes her holiday fun in week-ends at Coronada Beach—handy to Hollywood.

She says a series of week-ends with no movie cares is the best tonic she knows.

I saw her on her last Coronada Beach excursion, the centre of a happy crowd of young people.

Olivia, dashing about the beach in a brief, all-white playsuit, was the gayest of them all.

In attendance was Bette Davis' swain, George Brent, who followed her down to take her dancing Saturday night.

These location trips have done a lot towards helping Hollywood citizens to recognise America's beauties.

Spencer Tracy is returning to Idaho, where he made "Northwest Passage," to build a summer home.

Al Johnson's new film, "Swanee River," has reawakened the mammy singer's interest in the South. When he finishes the film he will make a solo trip in a general southern direction.

Paul Muni says that ever since he made "Juarez" he's been keen to visit Texas and other States bordering on Mexico.

Muni hopes to get there when he finishes work in his stage play, "Key Largo."

That charming French sophisticate, Claudette Colbert, has become one of Hollywood's most enthusiastic sponsors of the outdoor life.

Claudette is thoroughly enjoying "roughing it" in a mountain camp in Utah, on location with the Twentieth-Century Fox troupe filming "Drums Along the Mohawk."

She is tucked up on a mountain-side, forty miles from any township. She's persuaded her New York husband, Dr. Joel Pressman, to spend a few weeks' holiday with her in the Utah mountains, or somewhere else in America's backwoods.

The stars, in short, are adapting themselves to the times. They're having fun rediscovering America.

They give presents all the year round

MINK COAT, and a beauty, was a non-anniversary present to Myrna Loy from her husband, Arthur Hornblow, jun. But gardening is Myrna's great hobby, and her enthusiasm knows no bounds. To protect her pet peach tree from the recent sudden frosts in Hollywood, Myrna wrapped her mink coat around its trunk!

IMPRESSIVE RING is flashing from the hand of the enigmatic Garbo. But Garbo has never worn jewellery before—and the diamond is on her engagement finger!

GARDENING TOOLS as well as linen and other household equipment were given to Alice Faye by Tony Martin on their second wedding anniversary. But all her presents were lost when their new ranch home at Encino burned down.

DIAMONDS, thinks producer Gene Markey, are becoming to his wife, Hedy Lamarr. He made her a gift of a magnificent stone. But Hedy won't wear the sparkler on throat, wrist, or finger. No—she tucks it in her black hair.

LEATHER JACKET as worn by Bill Powell was warmly admired one day in the studio by tennis player Alice Marble. But was Alice surprised when a week later she received an exact copy of Bill's leather jacket—made to measure.

BIRTHDAY GREETINGS per telegram were received by Carole Lombard in shoals. But husband Clark Gable went one better: he arranged with the local telegraph company to have a singing messenger phone Carole at her studio at hourly intervals throughout the great day and warble "Happy Birthday to You!"

Why Hide Your Beauty?

One of the sorriest sights is the girl who has beautiful features and a lovely complexion yet hides these invaluable treasures beneath a coating of heavy, streaky face powder.

REVEAL YOUR TRUE LOVELINESS

Heighten your natural charm... gain additional "mas-appeal" use Le Charmé Face Powder. It's air-refined and super-sifted... delightfully scented. Its soft, satin-smooth texture blends with your natural colouring, giving fresh sparkling radiance to your complexion. Start using Le Charmé Face Powder today and gain this fascinating "sure-to-attract" allure.

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In thirty days you can grow long, curling, lashes and perfect eyebrows with Le Charmé Eyelash Grower. In the first few days results are evident. If you are not satisfied your money will be refunded. If unavailable locally 2/6 post free from Le Charmé, Box 22344, G.P.O., Sydney.



1 LORETTA meets magician David Niven and they elope.

• "Eternally Yours," drama made by Walter Wanger for United Artists release, meant lessons in conjuring for its star, David Niven.



4 UNDAUNTED by their divorce, David joins Loretta and second husband Broderick Crawford at a night club.



5 THEN David and Virginia, attending a house-party, discover Loretta.

I WON'T! I WON'T! I WON'T!



Peter just would not eat up his breakfast. Morning after morning there were scenes. Mother was desperate. Peter was listless. Lost weight.



Then the grocer suggested Kellogg's Rice Bubbles. "All the kiddies want them," he said. "The way they go Snap! Crackle! and Pop!" takes their fancy.



Peter couldn't resist that Snap! Crackle! and Pop! when he poured milk on his Rice Bubbles next morning. Mother was delighted—Rice Bubbles are just the nourishing and easily digested breakfast children need.



READY IN A JIFFY! No cooking needed with Kellogg's Rice Bubbles. You just pour them straight out of the packet on to your plate. Your grocer sells Kellogg's Rice Bubbles. Get a packet to-day.

R 13

Learn about men from THIS BACHELOR

DAVID NIVEN HAS SPECIAL RULES FOR THE GIRLS

By BARBARA BOURCHIER

IN United Artists' "Eternally Yours," David Niven plays a young magician who charms the heart out of Loretta Young.

In real life David has always done the same thing—but he is a pretty difficult young man to please. Do you know why? He expects the objects of his admiration to live up to five strict rules.

If they break them—he doesn't ask them out a second time!

I got these rules from David—for your special benefit, girls. If you live up to them, you are bound to please your own particular romance.

Don't ask him to go shopping with you. He will either be embarrassed or bored.

Don't ask him to carry bundles or packages.

Don't expect him to cart your lipstick, purse, etc., round in his pockets. They ruin the cut of his evening suit. Moreover, he sees through your game of "forgetting" to collect the baubles—and having a good excuse for ringing him the next day.

Don't constantly request cigarettes.

Don't patch up your make-up and your coiffure in public. Manners again. Besides, it looks as if you are more concerned with your appearance than with him.

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SCREEN ODDITIES

By CHARLES BRUNO



A TECHNICOLOR CAMERA IS KNOWN AS A "SPASH BOX" TO STUDIO WORKERS.

BELLS IN "HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME" WERE OF WOOD, SO RECORDINGS OF THE REAL NOTRE DAME BELLS WERE DUBBED IN... BUT PRODUCERS DIDN'T LIKE THEM AND SUBSTITUTED A SOUND TRACK OF THE CHIMES IN SAN FRANCISCO'S GRACE CATHEDRAL!

A REPLICA OF ROBERT FULTON'S STEAMBOAT, THE CLAREMONT, BUILT FOR "LITTLE OLD NEW YORK" IS EXACT IN EVERY DETAIL BUT THE MAIN ONE... IT IS DRIVEN BY A GASOLINE MOTOR!

Here's hot news from all studios!

From JOHN B. DAVIES, New York; BARBARA BOURCHIER, Hollywood; and JUDY BAILEY, London.

IRINA BARONOVA, principal ballerina of the Monte Carlo Ballet Russe for the past six years, has been signed by MGM for the role of Gaby the dancer in "Florian." Following an appearance at Coven Garden Irina dashed to Hollywood by transatlantic clipper, made a screen test two hours after her arrival, and started work immediately. Though only twenty-one Miss Baranova has often been hailed by ballet enthusiasts as the finest dancer in the world, and a worthy successor to the great Pavlova. She will appear in an elaborate ballet sequence in the picture and will try her hand at straight dramatic acting as well.

JANE BRYAN is resting while the studio decides on a suitable story for her next picture. Having scored such an outstanding success in "We Are Not Alone," Jane now rates as a highly valuable property whose career must be handled with much finesse. One of the stories under consideration is "Stuff of Heroes," by Ivan Goff, Australian

member of the Warner Bros. writing staff. It will be a fine feather in Ivan's cap if his story is chosen for Miss Bryan's follow-up to "We Are Not Alone."

SOMBRE John Garfield is taking rumba lessons. He's doing it for his own amusement and for his next picture.

CERTAINLY gave us a jolt to see pretty, seventeen-year-old Bonita Granville made up as a woman of about fifty for her role in "At Good Old Slawsh," Paramount picture of early college days. Bonita, who has only just emerged from the child-star class, was given the role after exhaustive tests, which proved she could be just as convincing as an elderly matron and as a young college girl. The picture will be one of those flash-back affairs, with Bonita and William "Golden Boy" Holden appearing at first as an elderly couple, then, in a quick cut back, as a pair of youthful college sweethearts. Apart from the middle-aged characterisation, the picture will give Bonita her first really grown-up, romantic role.

MARGARET SULLIVAN has been ordered off the set by her physician. She must take time out to rest her eyes. Nothing serious, the specialist says.

BRENDA JOYCE is the most unusual casualty of the week, having retired to her bed suffering from seasickness and sunburn—both acquired while working in scenes for "Little Old New York" on the back lot at 20th Century-Fox. The scenes took place on the deck of the Claremont, studio-made replica of the first steamboat, which now rides at anchor in the studio's man-made lake. For the sake of authenticity, the boat was gently rocked by a battery of wave-machines. That caused Brenda's mal de mer. The Californian sun did the rest.

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FRANK NEIL'S RIO NEW YEAR SHOWS

EVERY AFTERNOON ONLY AT 2.30

Anglo-French Revue Sentation

"CARRY ON"

Salicis Parisian Puppets

Elimar, Bobbie Morris

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TIVOLI

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PRIVATE VIEWS

By The Australian Women's Weekly Film Reviewer

★ ★ SEVENTEEN

(Week's Best Release)

Jackie Cooper, Betty Field, Otto Kruger. (Paramount.)

THIS adaptation of a Booth Tarkington tale has been made one of the most delightful comedies I have seen for a long time.

Its theme is adolescent love in a small town. Jackie Coogan is boyishly gauche as the 17-year-old, in the turmoil of his first love affair—with a sophisticated young miss (Betty Field), who has turned the heads of all the local youths.

The youngsters in the film take their affairs with a deadly earnestness that is irresistible to the audience. Jackie's struggles to do the right thing (have a dress suit and a smart car), and the absurd affectations of youth, are shown with an ease and naturalness that is rare in such comedies.

Mention must be made of the subtle characterisations of Otto Kruger, as his impatient, whimsical father, and Ann Shoemaker, his puzzled mother. She is the only one who gives the growing boy help and sympathy in his laughable difficulties.

Little mix of a small sister, well played by Norma Gene Nelson—Cameo and Haymarket-Civic; showing.

★ ★ SUSANNAH OF THE MOUNTAINS

Shirley Temple, Randolph Scott, Margaret Lockwood. (20th Century-Fox.)

SHIRLEY TEMPLE is as delightful as ever in this film—although she is in danger of losing some of her scenes to the other child actor, the Indian lad Good Rider, who puts up a remarkably good portrayal of a young Blackfoot Indian chief.

Incidentally, the Indians were brought down from the Blackfeet reservation in Montana, and their scenes are vividly realistic.

The story centres around the building of the Canadian-Pacific railway, and there are lots of thrilling clashes between the Indians and the famous Canadian Mounties, who are protecting the railway from raids. Excitement runs high when the hero, handsome Randolph Scott, is captured by the Indians, and is just about to be burned when he is saved by Shirley's intervention.

Shirley Temple, the sole survivor after an Indian massacre, is discovered by Randolph Scott, and taken to the rough surroundings of the barracks, where her winsome personality and charming humor contrast effectively with the rugged characters of the mounted police. The male cast, by the way, doesn't wear the well-known uniform we are so familiar with. At this earlier period in their history they had gorgeous uniforms with little braided caps, amusingly reminiscent of bell-boys.

Randolph Scott is quite the romantic hero, although he can enter into the spirit of fun with young Shirley when occasion demands. Margaret Lockwood brings a very feminine touch to the grim surroundings.

Worth seeing for Shirley and the Indian lad. Best elements are the light comedy scenes.—Plaza; showing.

DOROTHY LAMOUR is wearing zipped sarongs now. For a storm sequence in "Typhoon," in which she was drenched to the skin on every "take," Dorothy kept a supply of half a dozen duplicate sarongs, each one equipped with a concealed zipper to facilitate quick changing.

MERLE OBERON'S happiness in having her husband with her was short-lived. Alexander Korda has left Hollywood for duties in England.

ERROL FLYNN is the author of an adventure story called "Illegal Passage." Warner Brothers will buy it from him if he wants to play in it.

Our Film Gradings

★★★★ Excellent
★★★ Above average
★ Average
No stars — below average.

★ RANGE WAR

William Boyd, Russell Hayden, Betty Moran. (Paramount.)

THERE'S nothing like a real wild Western for entertainment and thrills—if you like them. This latest filming of the famous Hopalong Cassidy series has excitement in plenty, and big Bill Boyd, in the role of Hopalong, enters with zest into the part of fearless hard-riding hero of the plains.

Almost as well known as Hopalong himself is Russell Hayden, in the role of Lucky Jenkins, his loyal saddle-mate. A newcomer to the band this time is Britt Wood, with his mouth-organ.

Hopalong is called in to see that a railway being built by the ranchers is completed. Plots to sabotage it are directed by villainous land baron, who will lose the money paid by ranchers for transporting cattle across his land if the railway goes through. Bill Boyd, pretending to be an outlaw, unmasks the plot after a number of exciting adventures, which culminate in a terrific gun battle.

Slight romantic interest provided by Betty Moran and Russell Hayden. Camera work of Western scenery excellent.—Cameo and Haymarket-Civic; showing.

KONGA THE WILD HORSE

Fred Stone, Rochelle Hudson, Richard Fiske, Eddy Waller. (Columbia.)

PICTURES that centre their interest round an animal character must be very well done these days to pass muster, and this one does not come up to standard. It's not the horse's fault—he is a magnificent creature, and the film would have been improved if it had been more horse and less human actors.

But I feel a little tired of hearing these "human" old men affirming that it's more excusable to kill a man than to kill a horse.

Old horse-breeder Fred Stone finds the motherless colt Konga and takes him under his care. Fred loves his horses so much that even when the market falls, he refuses to turn his land over to the more profitable wheat-farming. (Incidentally he loses all his loved horses to the bank this way.) His attitude brings him into conflict with a wealthy wheat-grower when his horses stampede several times and ruin his neighbor's crops. Their quarrel comes to a climax when Fred Stone kills the man because he has supposedly shot Konga.—Plaza; showing.

Shows Still Running

*** **The Wizard of Oz**, Judy Garland, Frank Morgan, in dazzling musical fantasy in technicolor. Liberty, 7th week.

*** **Rulers of the Sea**, Doug Fairbanks, Jun., Will Fyfe, in vivid sea adventure drama. Prince Edward, 4th week.

*** **Babes in Arms**, Mickey Rooney, Judy Garland, in grand, sparkling musical. St. James, 3rd week.

*** **First Love**, Deanna Durbin, Robert Stack, in charming Cinderella romance. State, 3rd week.

*** **The Old Maid**, Bette Davis, Miriam Hopkins, in brilliantly-acted drama for women. Century, 4th week.

*** **Fifth Avenue Girl**, Ginger Rogers, Tim Holt, in fair, modern comedy. Mayfair, 3rd week.

*** **The Rains Came**, Myrna Loy, Tyrone Power, George Brent, in romantic drama of India. Regent, 3rd week.

WHERE DOES SHE GET SUCH ENERGY?



This nurse is over 50, has seen war service, lives a busy life, and yet keeps on her feet, tireless, fighting fit.

"I am a trained nurse in my early 50's and did much war service, and I would rather go without my early cup of tea than miss my 'little daily dose' of Kruschen Salts. I feel so fit and well. Many of my friends exclaim, 'How do you keep so fit?' If only people in middle life would take their morning dose, I am sure there would be less rheumatic pains, general discomfort, and happier faces around the breakfast table. I strongly recommend Kruschen and, with a moderate diet, people will enjoy real comfort."—Nurse S.P.

You, too, can have New Zest for Life!

Start sipping a pinch of Kruschen into your tea, or into a glass of hot water first thing every morning. Within one week, you'll have vim and vigour that everyone will envy. Sluggishness goes. You get that "Kruschen feeling" which has brought joy to millions. Kruschen Salts is obtainable at Chemists and Stores, price 1/6 and 2/9 per bottle.

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"It's the Little Daily Dose that does it."

There's MORE for YOUR MONEY in every tube of NUGGET WHITE CLEANER



Holds more—costs less! This larger tube of Nugget White contains the finest cleaner that ever brought a perfect finish to all White Shoes—Kid, Nu-buck and Canvas.

WILL NOT RUB OFF

Quick Pile Relief

Dr. Leonhardt's Vacuoid is guaranteed to banish any form of Pile misery, or money back. It gives quick action, even in old, stubborn cases. Vacuoid is a harmless tablet that removes blood congestion in the lower bowel—the cause of piles. It brings joyful relief quickly and safely or costs nothing. Chemists everywhere sell it with this guarantee.

Our London editor inspects giant FLYING BOATS

Australian airmen live in flying fortresses

By Beam Wireless from Mary St. Claire, our Special Representative in England

Proud of the future our Australian airmen are creating in England, and amused by the laconic statement of one of them that "the English are treating us well although we ARE pinching their girls"—I got permission to visit the squadron.

IMAGINE my delight when I was invited on board the giant Sunderland flying boats in which our boys will do sea patrol duty.

I am the only woman who has seen over these flying fortresses of the Coastal Command.

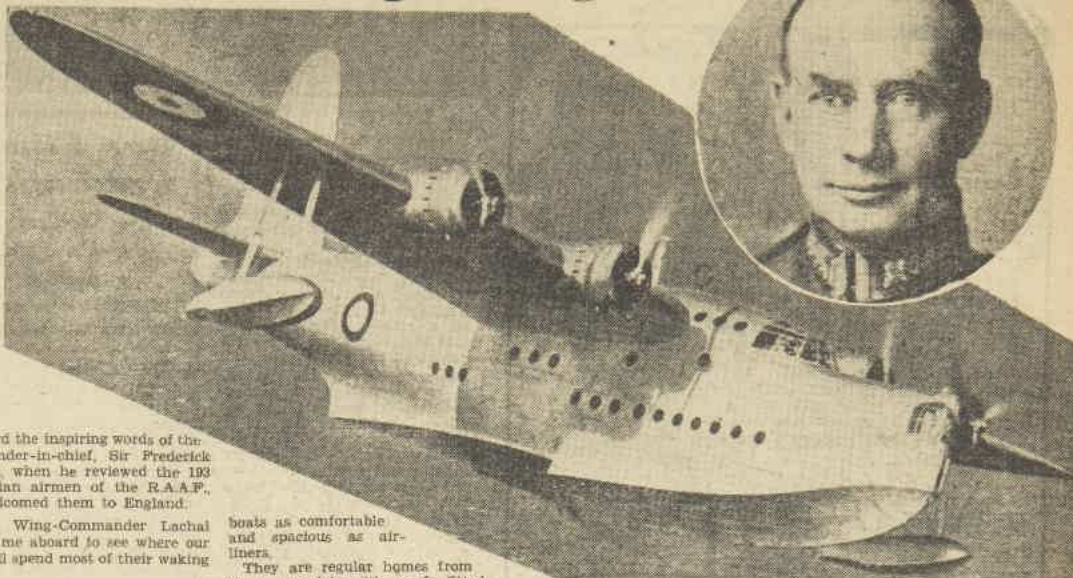
I heard the inspiring words of the commander-in-chief, Sir Frederick Bowhill, when he reviewed the 193 Australian airmen of the R.A.A.F., and welcomed them to England.

Then Wing-Commander Lachal invited me aboard to see where our boys will spend most of their waking hours.

I was surprised to find the flying

boats as comfortable and spacious as airliners.

They are regular homes from home, complete with comfy fitted-in beds, rugs on the floor, wardrobe



A SUNDERLAND flying boat. Royal Australian Air Force pilots are manning these huge planes in patrol duty off the English coast. These flying fortresses are the last word in war efficiency, and as comfortable inside as a de luxe airliner. In circle is SIR FREDERICK BOWHILL, who welcomed our fliers to England.

Now her mistress will believe that **PERSIL** WASHES WHITER

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WASHES WHITER
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THE AMAZING OXYGEN WASHER

J. KITCHEN & SONS Pty. Ltd.

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cases for a change of clothes and collapsible tables for meals.

The all-electric kitchen might well be the envy of any housewife, being compact and modern.

It is really amazing how space has been saved yet efficiency kept at the highest point. Up in the clouds on a bitterly cold day, the kitchens can supply a nourishing meal for the airmen.

There is good height in the cabins for even tall Wing-Commander Lachal did not have to stoop.

Already the boys have put home-like touches to their quarters—gun-leavees, autographs of celebrities on bulkheads, and mementos of duty patrol.

The beds are not makeshift, but have sheets and warm blankets.

But behind these arrangements for comfort there is grim efficiency.

Everything is shipshape for the long hours of patrol duty over the sea wastes, where, at any moment, the flying boat may be engaged in battle.

AN English officer told me that the Australian airmen are very popular.

The men of the Coastal Command already know what "whacko" means, and "Waltzing Matilda" is a very popular tune.

"The Australians know the ropes. You can't treat them as new boys," he said.

The pilot's cabin on a Sunderland is a mass of instruments, which are completely bewildering to a mere onlooker.

When I saw what the pilot has to watch I wondered if he had any time for flying the machine.

Alongside him sits a co-pilot, while behind him, seated at a neat, workmanlike desk, is the navigator, side by side with the wireless operator, whose set is immediately in front of him, like a telephone switch-board.

Side by side with the comfortable cabins is evidence of deadly warfare.

There are racks for deadly cargoes of bombs, with complicated instruments for dropping them.

Some idea of the deadly potentialities of this flying fortress is given when it is realised that the plane can drop ten bombs within a very small radius, while in the rear of the boat a gunner sits in his tiny seat no bigger than a typist's chair in a little windowed turret.

In this mixture of luxury travel and Spartan efficiency our boys will

spend most of the days from before dawn till after dark.

Breakfast is the first and best meal of the day, preceded by a cup of tea as dawn breaks.

This is followed by bacon and eggs, toast and marmalade, tea or coffee.

Lunch is a hot meal. This is not cooked aboard, but taken to the planes in a huge thermos container.

All meals are necessarily taken in relays from the moment the boat takes the air until it lands by the light of flares. When the men are on active service never for a moment does the vigilance relax.

Every unusual object, every unexpected ripple on the surface of the sea is closely examined lest it cover lurking danger to Britain's great sea-borne traffic.

ARTEMIS



REMOVES CIRCLES UNDER THE EYES
Lather it under your eyes before you go to bed. The cream sinks into your skin, and in the morning there is nothing left to wipe off. IT WILL POSITIVELY CLEAR UP ALL BLEMISHES.

ARTEMIS CREAM
Worth £5 to anyone with circles under the eyes. PRICE, 4/6. LARGE, 12/6. From Newton's Pharmacy, 333 Pitt St., Sydney. Also, Swift's Pharmacy, 372 Little Collins St., Melbourne.

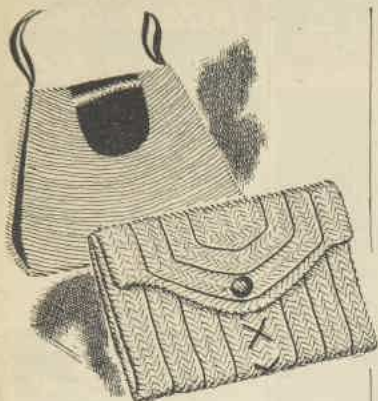
IF BACK ACHES KIDNEYS MAY NEED HELP

Flush Out Your 15 Miles of Kidney Tubes — Get Quick Relief

Don't expect rubbing to make your aching back well and strong again—if the trouble is caused by tired kidneys.

All the blood in your body circulates through your kidneys every 15 minutes to be drained of acids and wastes. Healthy persons pass about 3 pints a day and so get rid of the 2 pounds of waste matter. When the kidney tubes become clogged, bladder passages are often scanty and difficult. Instead of being filtered out, wastes and acids get backwashed into the blood and may become poisonous. This is often the beginning of aching backaches, leg pains, loss of pep and energy, getting up nights, lameness, swollen feet and ankles, puffiness under the eyes, rheumatic pains and dizziness.

Don't wait for serious trouble to try you being offered relief for DOAN'S BACKACHE KIDNEY PILLS and get the same quick relief they have been giving millions for many years. If backache is bothering you due to tired kidneys, try DOAN'S BACKACHE KIDNEY PILLS to-day.



FRENCH BAGS TO CLEAR!

Surprise Clearance of some of the smartest little bags in town! Hand made in France of string, they're just right for gay frocks. Top—String with leather. Priced at 15/6. Lower—String in bright colours, 12/6.

Blousettes at 4/11

Gaily Printed Cotton

Cool, light-hearted little blousettes in an assortment of bright designs. Slim, shirred waist. Sizes S.W. and W. 4/11.

GROUND FLOOR.



FARMER'S

P.O. Box 497 A.A. 'Phone M 2405.



Cool, cool Farmer's, where a constant 75% keeps you happily refreshed.

Special savings on imported MATERNITY FROCKS

One and two-piece styles to go!

So many modern young mothers have expressed their appreciation of the graceful gowns which Farmer's design for the Second Floor Salon... that we offer special reductions during January on all our imported maternity models. One and two-piece styles in plain navy, black or brown, or gay florals. Soft jackets, dainty touches of white. Frocks you'd like to wear any time! All at savings—the two illustrated are reduced 30/- each! Use the lay-by!

RIGHT

Us. 99/6, heavy sheer ensemble, adjustable skirt, pleated jacket, black, navy, brown, XSSW-W., now only 69/6

LEFT

Us. 79/6, butterfly-light imported silk frock with unusual yoke, fully adjustable skirt, navy, brown, SSW-W., 49/6

MATERNITY SALON — SECOND FLOOR.



"Coolie", white buck, navy or burgundy calf, halves, 2 1/2 to 7, at 15/9



"Middy", tailored white buck ghillie with all-leather heels, 2-7, 15/9



Basket-weave calf, white, brown, navy, black, T-bar, oxford, 2 to 7, 12/9

This active summer... bring your feet to the

Sport shoe centre

You'll want to walk—quickly, comfortably—on hot pavements or rough country roads. And Farmer's made "Sportees" for cool foot ease as well as fashion. Up in the "Sports Shoe Centre" they wait for active folk, in styles so many, at prices so low, that many people who really care for their feet buy two pairs at a time, wear them alternately. Shoes for happy feet, from 12/9.

AVAILABLE FOR MAIL ORDERS — SPORTS SHOE CENTRE, THIRD FLOOR.



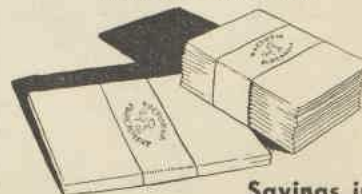
"Coolah", white buck ghillie, covered sports heels, 1 1/2, 2 to 7, 12/9



Bright idea! "Iron-on" Heel savers

A lightweight reinforcement for the heels of hosiery. Flexible, washable, invisible, ironed-on in few minutes. 4 prs. in pkt. 1/-

HABERDASHERY — GROUND FLOOR.



Savings in Parchment Notepaper

Selling of fine, parchment notepaper. 25 sheets and envelopes in box. Albert size. Us. 2/6. Now 1/6. Octavo, us. 3/-, 1/9

STATIONERY — GROUND FLOOR.



New English Silver-plated Cake Forks

English silver-plated Cake forks with cutter edge. A new, very smart design. Six in a presentation case. Priced at Farmer's, 8/6

SILVERWARE — GROUND FLOOR.

A SINGLE FLY MEANT TRAGEDY IN THIS HOME



PROTECT your FAMILY WITH FLY-TOX

Experimenting with cheap inferior sprays is dangerous—Get back to Fly-Tox. Fly-Tox is not only more economical, but it is safer, because every fly, every mosquito—in fact, every insect which is sprayed with Fly-Tox must die. Don't dare the danger of dreaded fly infection by using inefficient sprays. Get back to Fly-Tox—spray to kill!

Stop Gambling—get back to Fly-Tox—it is certain death to all insects.

Back to . . . FLY-TOX IT KILLS all INSECTS

HAPPY DAYS FOR BABY AND YOU



Be sure that you always have a supply of Ashton & Parsons' INFANTS' POWDERS. They do away with all the miseries of teething time—keep baby in fine fettle instead of fretting.

Cooling, comforting and promoting easy, regular motions, and PERFECTLY SAFE.

ASHTON & PARSONS' INFANTS' POWDERS

Write for Free Sample to PHOSFERINE (ASHTON & PARSONS) LTD. P.O. Box 34, North Sydney, N.S.W.

BABIES are Australia's Best Immigrants. In many homes, baby does not appear in the disappointment of husband and wife. A book on this matter contains valuable information and advice. Copies Free if 3d. sent for postage to Depart. & Co., Mrs. Clifford, 46 Elizabeth Street, Melbourne.

Women Also Serve

Girls achieve notable success as emergency signallers

"AFTER seeing them at work I am convinced that Australian girls make better signal operators than men," said Lieut.-Colonel Smith, O.C. Second Division Signallers, at the dinner at which 73 members of the Women's Emergency Signalling Corps in Sydney were presented with proficiency certificates.

Two of the many outstanding pupils are Miss Ena Stewart and Miss Myrtle Reeve.

Ena Stewart can send and receive at the rate of twenty-five words per minute, and Myrtle Reeve's distinction is that she attained the speed of ten words a minute, sending and receiving, after only three weeks' study.

The girls are trained by Mrs. F. V. McKenzie, electrical engineer, who points out that they do not seek to replace men in jobs but only to help if called upon.

Lieutenant-Colonel Smith expressed the opinion that they might have great value as operators at home if Australia has to send a large force overseas.

Mrs. McKenzie is preparing to train another 100 pupils this year, while last year's pupils will go on to more advanced work.

Some of them are already learning to take down telegrams directly on to the typewriter, and their later studies will include practical work, such as the connecting up and adjusting of signalling apparatus.

Big order sets needles flying

MEMBERS of the Queensland Red Cross Society, of which Lady Wilson is president, have been working very hard since they received a big order from Melbourne.

In connection with the Red Cross A.I.P., Brisbane branch was requested to supply the following: 1000 pairs of pyjamas; 2000 face-washers; 3000 pairs of socks; cardigans; 3000 khaki handkerchiefs; 600 white quilts; library material, and bundles of old linen.

It is estimated that this order will mean 100 cases have to be packed, but the Queensland workers were not daunted. They are working unceasingly so that their contribution may not fall short of the order.

Opens summer home for Red Cross

LADY MURIEL BARCLAY-HARVEY, wife of the Governor of South Australia, has arranged to throw open her summer residence at Marble Hill for public inspection on Sunday afternoon, January 21, to aid the Red Cross.

Lady Muriel suggested this recently to the chairman of the South Australian Division of the Red Cross (Mr. A. C. Edmunds), and at the next committee meeting of the Red Cross, which Lady Muriel attended in her capacity of State president, it was accepted with delight.

It is being arranged that people will be able to wander in the lovely garden and go to the top of the fine old house to see the magnificent view of the plains with the sea beyond.



LADY MURIEL BARCLAY-HARVEY (right) with Miss Laura Elkins, her private secretary.



MISS MYRTLE REEVE (left) and Miss Ena Stewart, who, with seventy-one others, have won their proficiency certificates in the Women's Emergency Signalling Corps.

Funds raised by new party notions

A "PENNY POW Wow Party" and a "Beetle Party" are two of the novel ways of raising money for their new year's war effort, which are being planned by members of the Port Noarlunga Women's Defence Service Branch in South Australia.



Mrs. John Bice, chairman of the branch, explained what these two parties are.

At a Penny Pow Wow party all the guests have to do something entertaining. As they perform, all the other guests pay one penny.

For a Beetle party the people are divided into two circles competing against each other. They throw a dice alternately.

If someone throws a 6 she draws the beetle's head, a 5 its body, and so on. Whichever circle succeeds in drawing the whole beetle first wins. Each player pays to play.

Never too old to help

ORGANISED by Miss F. F. Fourdriner, residents of the Old Colonists' Homes in Melbourne have formed a group known as "The Old Colonists' Home Group," to work for the Red Cross and Australian Comforts Fund.

No one in the cottages is under 60 years of age, yet between 100 and 110 old colonists of both sexes have joined.

Four collectors go round once a month and everyone subscribes at least one shilling. Some of the money goes to buy wool, and the rest is put in the bank until used for some specific need of the Red Cross or Comforts Fund.

Several knitters are over 80. One dear old lady of 90 has completed an airman's scarf of blue with scarlet edging.

Some specialise. One knitter of 85 loves doing helmets. She had already sent in four, each beautifully knitted. Another over 80 is wonderful at scarves, and is now on her fourth.

Two of the best knitters are nearing 80.

To keep alive the keen spirit of good-fellowship and service, Miss Fourdriner is arranging a series of monthly entertainments for the group.

Organising holds no terrors for her. She founded the War Chest flower shop in N.S.W. in the last war, and she also went all over N.S.W. recruiting men and money for war.

She is president of the committee of 12 which has Miss Lucy Coppin, daughter of the founder of the homes, as patroness.

Uses handicrafts talents to full

MRS. W. J. GALL, of Brisbane, is one of the cleverest Australian needlewomen working for charity. It would be much easier to ask her what she has not made than to ask her what she has.

During the last war Mrs. Gall worked for the Australian Comforts Fund, and soon rejoined for this war, and is again hard at work.

In 1914-18 she did a great deal in the cutting-out room, and also cooked in the Koo-ee kitchen.

For many years she has knitted all sorts of garments, made children's toys, children's clothes, crocheted evening bags, and other things, mostly for charity.

Mrs. Gall is a foundation member of the Playground Association, and one of the earliest members of the Creche and Kindergarten, and was also on the committee of the Sick Children's Hospital for 30 years.

She is noted for her remarkable patience in teaching others her handicrafts.

Instant success! NEW, QUICK



ODO-RO-NO Cream
CHECKS PERSPIRATION SAFELY

Stops perspiration instantly. Dries quickly—vanishes completely. Use before or after shaving. Keeps underarm dry 1-3 days. Ends perspiration odour. Won't irritate skin or rot dresses. Non-greasy • stainless • soothing. GET ODO-RO-NO CREAM TODAY from all good Chemists and Stores. 1/- and 2/-

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN KIDNEYS STOP WORK?

The kidneys are amongst the most important organs of the human body. The correct function of the kidneys is the removal from the blood stream of surplus water and impurities which form from the natural decay of the tissues. If the kidneys do not carry out this work properly, these impurities are allowed to accumulate in the blood stream and to become distributed throughout the system, setting up disorders which eventually cause diseases such as Rheumatism, Gout, Sciatica, Lumbago, Anaemia, and many other prevalent ailments.

Sufferers from such complaints will not find relief until the kidneys are restored to health. For over sixty years Warner's Safe Cure has been the accepted remedy for all kidney disorders—it is quick, effective and definitely non-habit forming.

One happy correspondent from North Fitzroy writes: "I suffered with kidney and liver trouble for a number of years and tried practically every medicine on the market without result. I then tried Warner's Safe Cure, and after taking a few bottles I began to feel a different man. I continued with the medicine and am now my old self again, thanks to Warner's Safe Cure."

Chemists and Storekeepers sell Warner's Safe Cure in Concentrated form (non-alcoholic) at 2/6, and in the original 8/- bottles.

An illustrated booklet dealing with kidney and liver diseases, diet, etc., will be sent free on application to H. H. Warner & Co., Ltd., 530 Little Lonsdale Street, Melbourne.

SKIN DISEASES

Acne, Pimples, Varicose Ulcers.



Psoriasis Eczema Dermatitis

SCALP TROUBLES etc.

MR. ARTHUR PASCOE, M.N.A.M.H. The celebrated Skin Specialist, has opened in Sydney, where sufferers may now obtain his world famous treatment which takes the disease out of your blood. For full particulars of treatment, which is carried out in your own home, write or call and obtain FREE our Thirty-page booklet, "NATURE'S WAY TO HEALTH," which deals with all Diseases. Pascoe's Skin Disease & Health Service, 90 Pitt Street, Sydney.

A.I.F. leader, off duty, enjoys a cigarette



GENERAL SIR THOMAS BLAMEY, commanding the 2nd A.I.F., and Lady Blamey in their Sydney flat. Sir Thomas and Lady Blamey are spending a week in Sydney and saw the march of 6,000 N.S.W. members of the 2nd A.I.F. last week, the only march in which they will take part before embarking for service overseas. The General, wearing mufti, arrived in Sydney without ceremony, a day earlier than he had been expected. He and Lady Blamey were met at the train by only a few friends and relatives. He put on his uniform for the march past, which was viewed by fifteen army generals at the saluting base, where Lord Gowrie took the salute. Smoking a pipe or a cigarette, the General in mufti looks more like an English squire than a soldier. This was probably one of his last few appearances out of uniform. He will go overseas as soon as he has seen "every member of the 6th Division safely off."

—Women's Weekly photo

Mrs. Eden discusses the "Two Mr. Edens"

Mr. Casey and Mr. Eden became fast friends in London

By Air Mail from MARY ST. CLAIRE, Our Special Representative in England.

Mrs. Anthony Eden wasn't sorry when Australia's Mr. Casey left for home. The very real friendship which existed between Mr. Casey and Mr. Eden robbed the Dominions Secretary's wife of much of her husband's company.

"I can scarcely call my husband my own these days," said Mrs. Eden when I called at the Edens' magnificent town house, which, with art treasures "evacuated" for safety, remains one of the most delightful and restful of homes.

"It was bad enough when Anthony was Foreign Minister," Mrs. Eden continued, "for though he was away a great deal I did see something of him when he was home."

"When my husband received the appointment to his present post I really was looking forward to some of our days together—but it was not to be."

"Then when your Mr. Casey came on the scene I knew till that man went I must play the part of a 'political widow.'"

Mrs. Eden, who is perhaps best qualified to judge whether her husband and Mr. Casey are as alike as photographs make them appear, thinks that they are even more akin in temperament than they are in looks.

"I've watched them both closely when at informal and formal gatherings. They always seem to be together and I find that their mannerisms—such as twiddling a pencil, or thrusting one hand in the lapel of their coats—are very much the same."

"Their tastes seem to be alike and, from what I can gather from Anthony's conversation about Mr. Casey, their ideas run along much the same lines."

Like same foods

"In fact, the only real difference I can see is that your Mr. Casey is three shades darker than my husband, and he parts his hair on a different side."

"Why, even their taste in food seems to be the same, for Anthony's favorite dish is Smelt, and it is a favorite with Mr. Casey also."

"I had pheasant sent specially



ENGLAND'S Mr. Eden and (right) Australia's Mr. Casey. London calls Mr. Casey "the bronzed Mr. Eden."

Mr. Eden may visit Australia

MR. EDEN said last week in London:—"I may have the opportunity to visit Australia again before long, or at least before I have relinquished my present portfolio." He was in Australia for the Imperial Press Conference in 1925.

"I don't want this place to be just a canteen for soldiers, so I'm making it a club with a membership of one shilling."

"I sent out for an Australian cookery book so that the Australian boys can get meals at my place 'like mother used to make.'"

"There's only one thing about your women, though," she said, "they seem to use plenty of good butter and cream in all their cakes and all the best cuts of meat."

"It may not be so easy for me to lay my hands on these."

Before most pieces were moved to a place of safety the Edens' town house was a veritable museum of treasures, for Mrs. Eden's father was a collector of antiques and furniture and most of his collection was left to her.

Contrast in rooms

HER sitting-room has polished floor and rugs, deep restful arm-chairs, and wide, low settee, with gold curtains at the long windows repeating the brown-and-gold color scheme of the room.

There is an air of comfortable disorder about the book-strewn tables; the writing-desk in the corner is heaped with letters and, above a blazing fire, the antique mantel-piece is covered with intimate snapshots of Mrs. Eden's brilliant, good-looking politician husband.

Next door there is a very different room.

Furnished in the same quiet brown, duller gold and touches of green, the Dominions Secretary's sitting-room is a model of neatness, efficiency, and quiet orderliness.

It is a fitting background for an important statesman.

"There's never a pin out of place," was Mrs. Eden's remark as I surveyed the room where so many secrets of international importance have, no doubt, been exchanged.

"I send all his letters and papers to his room in the morning with his morning tea and he reads them in bed. Once he gets up the day begins and I rarely see him till after eight o'clock at night."

"I suppose that is why we have become such film fans, for it is quite useless trying to book seats for the theatre or anything formal."

Though a keen connoisseur of art, intensely musical and widely travelled, Mrs. Eden confessed to a great regard for the film stars, and told me the highlight of her last trip to America was the fact that the favorite star of herself and her husband—Gary Cooper—was a passenger on the boat.

Perhaps if Mr. Casey goes to America to represent Australia, Americans will wonder if Mr. Eden has come back!

ANOTHER NEW GIFT

Set of 3 PUDDING BASINS FREE for SIREN Soap users

SIREN'S extra-soapy suds make washing easy.

SEE HOW THEY MATCH THESE KITCHEN JUGS TOO!

*** SET OF 3 BLUE BANDED PUDDING BASINS**
SAVE 120 SIREN CROSSES
Send 1/9 to cover freight and packing for set.

*** SET OF 3 KITCHEN JUGS**
Blue Banded to match Basins 1, 1 and 1 1/2 pint sizes. SAVE 184 SIREN CROSSES
Send 1/- to cover freight and packing for set.

*** BREAD BOARD**
Strong, gaily hand-painted; poker-worked edges. SAVE 36 SIREN CROSSES
Send 7d. to cover freight and packing

BREAD SAW
Heavy stainless Sheffield Steel. SAVE 36 SIREN CROSSES

ALSO

AND MANY MORE GIFTS—WRITE FOR LIST TO LINTAS GIFT DEPOT

4 CROSSES WITH EACH LARGE BAR

1 CROSS WITH EACH UTILITY TABLET

Save these crosses

HOW TO GET YOUR GIFT

Take your crosses to:
LINTAS FREE GIFT DEPOT,
147 York Street (Town Hall end), SYDNEY.

If you cannot call or send someone for your gift, cut out this form, fill in particulars, enclose with crosses and stamps to cover freight and packing (on gifts marked *) and address to:

LINTAS FREE GIFT DEPOT,
Box 4267 Y, G.P.O., SYDNEY.

NOTE: Uncertain conditions make these offers subject to alteration without notice.

DO NOT SEND A LETTER, BUT USE PRINTED FORM

Name _____

Address _____

Enclosed _____ Crosses _____

State the Gift required _____

Freight and packing _____

Gottings of the Week

— by Miss Midnight —



• LIEUT. MILLARD, captain of 2nd A.I.F. cricket team which played famous 1st A.I.F. Eleven at Trumper Park, watches match with Mrs. Charles Finlay.



• MARRIED A WEEK. Dr. and Mrs. John Mutton return from honeymoon for Mutton-Taylor wedding. Mrs. Mutton is wearing her wedding gown.



• LUNCH-TIME in Sydney for Melbourne's Sue Fraser . . . at Prince's with Len Muir.



• HOMEWARD BOUND. Topsy Bahl and Mick Lewington leave Palm Beach after a day in the sun.

Now country tennis . . .

WISH I lived in the country. What with Royal Show, Sheep Show, polo, spring races, summer heat . . . and now Country Tennis Week, there are more reasons for the country coming to town than any of us townies can find to take us to the country.

However, it's good for the lemonade trade, so I'm told by the barman at White City Clubhouse.

Watch play for a while from club verandah. Then drawn by trio of quaint and colorful hats way down below. Discover wearers are Mrs. Alan Payne and Mrs. Jack Hunter, both in cretonne models with O.S. brims, and Mrs. Noel Townsend in sky-high Mexican model sewn with tiny colored pom-poms. All from Gloucester way.

Ducking around the back of a court Ruth Kennedy serves a side-liner which almost accounts for one of my teeth. Ruth's from Newcastle, also represented by Lola Garrett, schoolteacher Alice Menzies and Clarice Cashman, who are staying with Alice's family at Killara.

Ballet musing . . .

DROP into the Royal to mingle with the best people at the Ballet. Close on my heels comes Melbourne's Betty Baillieu in a family party with her parents, the Percy Willsallens. Gardenias adorn Betty's hair to match her pencil-slim white printed frock. Her mother pins mauve orchid to shoulder of black crepe gown.

In the circle foyer I spy Mrs. Henry Charles Osborne (or maybe Mrs. Hardy) in crisp white pique frock and matching jacket.

Just back from her honeymoon Mrs. Marcus Edwards (pianist Miriam Hyde) arrives wearing tailored model of pale blue cloque.

Spy also the Hunter Bowmans, Joyce Carpenter, Norman Lindsay, Pat Cape, Ken Rigby.

"Tween scenes dancer Dmitri Rostoff (White Russian and ex-Cosack) tells me he used to be "somebody" as a refugee. But no more.

Celebrations . . .

PLENTY of celebration after "Quiet Wedding" premiere at Minerva. Leading man John Wood goes to party given in his honor by the Grant Coopers . . . Pat McDonald, who wears the wedding gown in the finale, to one aboard her parents' boat, specially brought from Palm Beach to Rose Bay.

Smart matron in audience is Mrs. Tom Owen, just back from holiday at Orange with husband and daughter Denise. Goes on after the show with Mrs. Jim Eakin and Errol Allen to have farewell drinks with Errol, who is off to Bombay by flying boat.

They catch the eye . . .

MRS. SYD CROLL'S dinner frock entirely composed of narrow white Valenciennes lace bands, diagonally arranged, and threaded with black velvet ribbon around low décolletage and sleeves.

Jean Gillespie's full-skirted black net evening gown, appliqued with colorful floral sprays on skirt and short sleeves.

Mrs. John Fairfax's necklace of small golden bells, with red strikers.

Beach highlights . . .

TERRIGAL . . . Molly Brearley's sweeping striped cotton coats . . . Robin Eakin's turbans.

PALM BEACH . . . Noreen Fuller's gipsy skirt of navy furnishing weave printed with bunches of white carnations . . . Betty Billerwell's Hawaiian print swim suits . . . Nedra Levy's two-piece Hawaiian and lastex suits . . . Colleen Bennet's immaculate sunbaking suits . . .

Soldiers' farewells . . .

FAREWELLS for the men in khaki have brightened the old town since New Year. Champagne flows all night at farewell "do" given at Prince's by Sam Hordern (of Armored Cars) and Wal Anderson. Peter Willsallen guest of honor.

Glimpse Tom Porter, of Adelaide, squiring his "deb." cousin, Annette Stogdale.

Parties almost nightly for Ted and Mal Body . . . one of the brightest being get-together of other old "King's" boys, including Mal Vincent, Max Buchanan, Gerry Chambers. Also Jean Rofe, Shirley Poynter.

Bride in Sydney . . .

MEET the just-married Mrs. Dick Whittington (Peggy Dale), dashing into the Australia. "Motored from Adelaide on honeymoon," says Peggy . . . but during her honeymoon Peggy has seen her husband mostly on the cricket pitch. He is Sheffield Shield cricketer playing with Bradman and others for South Australia.

Rules being that wives aren't allowed to stay with their husbands on tour, Peggy has had to go to a different hotel. In Sydney, she and Dick have been staying with her father at Wollstonecraft.

They also swim . . .

TAKE my usual morning plunge at Lady Martin's, which is one beach where the social sunbakers also swim. Pride of the beach since Christmas is Susan Watt's life-size canoe. Gillian Galbraith and other young ones . . . and some not so young . . . line up for rides.

Mrs. Ernest Watt arrives in snappy two-piece swim suit. Brings hamper for picnic luncheon, and entertains the Hordern hopefuls, Sam and Sarah, both looking adorable in white trunks. Also Bill and Ian Hayward, who are stunning the beachcombers with their impeccable manners.

The young Haywards are here with their mother, Mrs. Ian Hayward, of Adelaide, to say farewell to their father, who is in 2nd A.I.F. They have taken Joan Galbraith's flat overlooking Lady Martin's.

Heard around town . . .

REFURBISHINGS at Romano's . . . honey-colored carpet replacing the emerald-green.

Fifty-three yards of ninon compose frock worn this Tuesday by Mary Nelson when she marries Peter Coleman in Tomboomba.

And seen . . .

BUNNY WILKINSON . . . trousseau shopping. Wedding soon.

Griff and Daisie Tait lunching a deux at Romano's.

The E. J. Watts at "The Lion Has Wings."



• AU REVOIR, says Marcia Ward to Private Keith Beattie after A.I.F. march through Sydney.



• DEEP PURPLE frock and hat for Margaret Longworth, and white for Nancy Baldick at Randwick races.



• IT'S A LOVELY PARTY, said Dorothea (left) and Sarndra, when their mother, Mrs. C. V. Walker, took them to lunch at Romano's before Russian Ballet matinee.



• MATRON CONSTANCE FALL (right), who leaves with party of fifty nurses and 2nd A.I.F., at farewell dinner. Left is Miss E. R. MacNevin, of A.T.N.A.

Betty's "racey" narratives

Women punters who have a charge account with bookies

By BETTY GEE

I saw a handsome young woman walk up to a bookie at Randwick last week and book £50 on a horse without producing the cash.

It seems she runs a credit account with certain bookmakers, and I believe there are scores of others who "bet on the nod," but, of course, they don't all put fifties on their fancies.

MOST of these women credit bettors are very quiet about it. While the crowd surges round the front of the stand eagerly awaiting a pip over the odds, they usually creep up behind and whisper their bets to the bookmaker.

There are a few prominent lady owners, a number of bookmakers' wives, some women in a big way of business in the city, and hotelkeepers or their wives, who get into this custom of booking bets.

It saves battling through the ring with a lot of money about you if you are in the habit of betting big.

Wouldn't it be lovely to know a "certainly" and go up to a bookie and say: "I want fifty pounds on it, Mr. Matthews," and he would turn to his clerk and say, "£300 to £50 Delmestor, to Miss Betty Gee."

But then who'd settle for me if the horse were beaten? It would be nice to have a rich husband to pass on the settlement to. "Will you kindly send a cheque to the bookmaker for my bets on Saturday, dear?"

Settle by cheque

THESE big women bettors settle mostly by cheque if they lose.

Some wait until the next day's races and then hand over the cash amount of their loss.

If they win the bookie sends the cheque to their addresses, and I suppose the mail always arrives after hubby has gone to the city.

We women have no settling clubs like the men.

For the male of our species there are Tattersall's Club, City Tattersall's and the Albert Clubs for settling bets the day after the races, and they are quite a business.

At Tattersall's, the biggest of all, many thousands of pounds change hands. You see the bookmakers or their clerks sitting at tables with huge piles of notes ranging from £1 to £100.

Dickie says he saw a punter coolly collect £5000 over the Epsom and Metrop. The bookie just paid out fifty £100 notes as if they were pennies! No receipt. Just put a cross beside the name of the recipient to show he had been paid.

Mr. Jim Hackett, sen. (now retired) told me last Cup time in Melbourne that bookmakers who bet in a big way have to take a lot of money to all the important settlements.

He said he always took £10,000 for Cups or Epsoms, etc., in the big betting days.

He explained that although he might have won £2000 from his clients or even more, this was necessary. The losing clients might forward cheques, or they might come late to settling.

So the balance of money had to be there to pay those who had won from him. So a big surplus was always necessary.

Biggest pay-out

I BELIEVE the biggest pay-out in the history of these settlements was over Heroic and Pilliwinkie when they won the Newmarket and Australian Cup double in 1926.

Heroic's owner, Mr. C. B. Kellow, backed the double for £75,000 for himself and his friends.

His representative collected £20,000 from Leviathan bookmaker Bob Jansen the morning after the Cup, £10,000 from each of three other bookies, and some parcels of £5000, while there was a £10,000 collect from Mr. Hackett's firm in Sydney.

Well, now, after having ventured into the realms of colossal plunging, let's get back to everyday life and see if there is anything worth a five-shilling bet at Randwick next Saturday.

The Head Waiter warns me to follow Ashment, and I see it is in the Maiden at this meeting, so I shall take his tip.

I've had Panchio for a place tote from the Ice Man, but Blue Blood for the Beralo comes straight from Mr. Brian Crowley, his owner, a visiting squatter.

My milliner says one of her assistants gets sound inside information about Georgie Price's horses from the sweetheart of one of the stable-lads, and they expect to win three races at this meeting.

It appears Kiwi is for the fillies' division of the Nursery, Waireka for the Sifton Handicap, and Mildura for the January Handicap.

Don't you recall Waireka winning six races last season as a two-year-old, and she has had only one race this year and will soon be ready to win again.

I happen to know that Mr. Clem Withycombe believes Freckles worth following in everything he races for, and he's in the Farm Encourage next Saturday.



DAME ENID LYONS

"Like the Queen," says Dame Enid of Mrs. Chamberlain

Dame Enid Lyons in her Sunday night broadcasts from 2GB gives illuminating glimpses of celebrities she has met overseas.

In a recent broadcast she paid tribute to the charm of Mrs. Chamberlain, and described No. 10 Downing Street from the inside.

MRS. CHAMBERLAIN is a beautiful woman," said Dame Enid, "with a pink-and-white complexion, blue eyes, and masses of light brown hair."

"No Press portrait ever does her justice. She has great gentleness of manner, and is unfailingly kind."

"In many respects she reminds me of the Queen."

"She does some public speaking, but told me that during recent years she had considerably curtailed her public activities so that she might devote all her time to her husband."

Dame Enid said Mrs. Chamberlain completely redecorated No. 10 Downing Street, official residence of the Prime Minister, at the same time keeping its Old World charm and dignity.

"It was shortly before we left London for the last time that we were invited to lunch with Mr. and Mrs. Chamberlain, just you two with our two selves. We had met them before, of course, on our first visit; we had heard Mr. Chamberlain deliver his budget to the House of Commons, and in a subsequent after-dinner speech my husband had laughingly said, 'I think I have had some influence on the budget, because when the Chancellor was delivering the budget he looked up to the gallery and caught sight of me, and immediately afterwards announced important concessions to the fathers of large families.'"

Dame Enid Lyons broadcasts to the women of Australia every Sunday night at 10 o'clock over station 2GB and the other stations of the Macquarie Network.

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Water Runs Downhill

Continued from Page 5

SHE hesitated a long time before answering. At last she said, "That's just what I don't know. I've had a good offer for an option, and Gregory wanted me to take it right off. He was against my coming up here. Let the buyer worry, he told me."

"Who's Gregory?"

She flushed and looked down at her left hand. "Gregory Mallinson is the other party to this contract—as you call it. He's the son of Daddy's old partner."

"Wealthy?"

"Quite."

"That's nice," he murmured. "Why didn't you take the offer?"

"I thought you'd understand that," she said, gazing at him steadily.

"There must have been something behind Daddy's refusal to sell. For one thing, he was a thoroughly honest man, and he wouldn't have taken money for property he knew was worthless. Or there may have been something down there he didn't want people to see. In either case I couldn't sell blindly."

Mark felt a pleasant warmth along his veins. "That's not the usual attitude," he observed.

"You think I'm foolish, then?"

"Not if you die for it," he answered. Seeing her cheeks begin to color, he hurried on: "Just one more question. Did Mallinson have other holdings in the neighborhood?"

Cynthia wrinkled her forehead. "I believe he had a hunting lodge. Gregory has mentioned it."

Mark nodded and stared down the tunnel. There were ominous cracks in the walls, and rills of powdery dust trickled from new fissures in the roof. It might be minutes, it might be hours, but that passage was certain to crumble. He turned back to Cynthia.

"You'd like to see it to the end, wouldn't you?"

"Yes, I would," she admitted. "But I've asked enough from you already. As you say, we have a chance here, probably none farther in."

"Forget that," he replied. "To be frank, I'm as curious as you are, now. Besides, I've got a hunch."

She glanced at him curiously. "A way out, you think?"

"I don't know," he shrugged. "It's just an odd feeling. Let's give it a try, anyhow."

She fell in step beside him without another word, and they moved down the tunnel. The passage felt narrower and chillier than the one they had left, and the gloom beyond their lights seemed deeper. Mark kept an eye out for weak spots in the roof and walls, for there was plenty of chance for another slide. By unspoken agreement, they held their tongues.

They had just swung around a bend when Mark heard a snap in the ceiling above them. He didn't wait to look up; he simply put his hand between Cynthia's shoulders and pushed her down the corridor. At the same instant he dodged a huge chunk of rock that grazed his right side, and stepped back as a section of the wall tore loose in front of him. He was neatly trapped between the two, and overhead the ceiling was ready to finish the job if he tried to pull himself loose.

He saw Cynthia turn round and point the light at him. "Keep away!" he warned her. "This roof's coming down."

She glanced up, but kept coming. When she reached him, she began collecting pieces of rock. Mark saw what she had in mind. If she could fill in the area between his back and the juncture of the two rocks, he might be able to wriggle out before the ceiling fell.

It was delicate work. He felt the perspiration trickle down his side as Cynthia fitted the stones into place. When the last chink was filled, she picked up the lantern and moved cautiously aside.

"Can you do it?" she whispered.

"I'll be right! But you'd better get a start. I'll be travelling fast when I leave here."

He twisted a little. The rock gave half an inch, then balanced against Cynthia's masonry. So he braced himself with both hands, and his hips out of the opening, and sprinted down the corridor.

There was no other sound for a moment, but just as he caught up with Cynthia he heard a grinding roar behind him, as if the whole hill had fallen into the tunnel. He turned and looked back.

Please turn to Page 36

GRACE BROS

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DQ11—Striking Design in Guaranteed British Cotton Blend. Plain trimming gives attractive finish to line at waist. In shades of Blue, White, Green, Lengths, 33in., 36in., 39in., 42in. Usual Price, 8/11. JANUARY SPECIAL 7/11

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DQ15—Gay Design of Imitation Linen, gathered elastic waist. Full skirt, slight ruffles, buttoned to waist. Shades: Red, Navy, Green, Autumn, Lengths, 36in., 39in., 42in. Usual Price, 7/11. JANUARY SPECIAL 5/11



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DM17—Girl's Play Suit of Fine Check Cotton (guaranteed). White binding around neck and down front, trimmed with pearl buttons. In shades of Navy, Red, Green. Lengths, 25in., 28in. Usual Price, 5/11. JANUARY SPECIAL 4/11



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TODAY'S WAR DIARY

By

The BRIGADIER-GENERAL

An authoritative day to day review of the progress of the War on all fronts by one of the most brilliant military leaders Australia has produced.

SUNDAYS TO FRIDAYS

10 P.M.

2GB—2GB

Water Runs Downhill

Continued from Page 35

"YOUR father's secret is safe enough from that direction."

"Ours too, I should say. This is what you expected, isn't it?"

Mark looked down at her. He noticed how one chestnut curl outlined the shape of her ear. "I didn't expect," he smiled, "that you'd be saving my life. Thanks—and believe me, I mean it."

She gave him a mock curtsy. "It was a pleasure, sir."

"I doubt that," he grinned.

They continued along the passage. Mark's lantern had been buried in the slide, so he took Cynthia's and shot its beam ahead of them. The rock was firmer in this part of the tunnel, but the air had a pronounced chill. Mark strained his eyes forward, hoping for a clue to their situation.

But neither of them was prepared for what they found. Far ahead, the rays of the lantern suddenly glinted on a smooth horizontal plane.

"What's that?" Cynthia murmured. "You'll see," Mark answered grimly, raising the light above his head.

"Water!" she gasped.

He nodded. "The one thing I didn't count on."

When they reached the edge, they saw that the water made a narrow, rectangular lake, stretching from their feet to a point thirty yards beyond, where the roof of the tunnel sloped out of sight beneath the surface. Cynthia shrugged.

"End of the line," she remarked quietly. "I saved your life, did you say?"

Mark didn't answer at once. He probed the brown eyes, dwelt on the steady mouth and chin. The moment had undertones he couldn't joke about.

"You did better than save my life," he said carefully. "In half a day you've shown me beauty, hon-

esty, courage. I wish I had known you years ago."

She dropped her glance. "We'd have been good friends, I think. You're a lot like my father."

"Thanks," he murmured. Kicking a pebble into the water, he added, "Life's queer—it runs out on you just when you've found what it means."

He watched the ripples glide out over the black surface. Water, the perfect seal, or was it? His eyes were thoughtful as he turned back to Cynthia.

"Can you swim?" he asked.

"Why, yes. Rather well."

He hesitated. "Don't get your hopes up, but maybe we can get out of here."

"Oh, tell me!"

"Has it struck you that this lake has no business in front of us?"

"I don't understand."

"Water runs downhill! We've been on a down slope ever since we came in. So we've either reached the end of the mine, or the passage turns up again beyond here. Either way, we're near the bottom."

She nodded slowly. "I see. And you want—"

"To find out. The answer's down there somewhere."

Cynthia laid her fingers on his arm. "Don't try it!" she begged, and there was a note in her voice Mark hadn't heard before. "Won't you stay dry for the hours that are left?"

He put his hand over hers. "Hours aren't enough. Don't you see?"

"Yes, but—"

"No buts. You hold the lantern."

Slipping off jacket and boots, he waded into the water. It was cold, but no worse than he'd expected. He kept walking till the water reached his armpits, then struck out. The roof pressed closer.

When he could go no farther on the surface, he trod water for a moment and glanced back at Cynthia, who was leaning forward to watch him. He grinned briefly, then kicked himself over and bled down along the underwater slope.

Twice he felt the ceiling scrape his back, still descending at the same angle. At the end of sixty seconds he realised he'd have to turn round; his temples were pounding, and he had to clench his teeth to keep his mouth closed. It seemed an eternity before his head broke the surface and he could stumble back to the shore.

"Started too slowly," he panted. "I'll try again in a minute."

He plunged in again. On this trip he dived more sharply and wasted no strokes feeling for the side of the passage. He shot deeper and deeper, with the pressure on his eardrums increasing by the second. Finally, just as he thought he must turn back once more, his hand met a solid wall of rock. Cynthia's phrase came to him—"end of the line."

Turning over so that his soles were against the roof, he pushed downward across the fence of the barrier, exploring it with his fingers. Suddenly he found what he was praying for. It was a hole less than a yard in diameter.

He wriggled through and felt the outlines of a new passage beyond. This tunnel angled steeply upward, so that a dozen strokes brought his head above water. Crawling out into the darkness, he noticed that the air was fresher here. As soon as he was rested, he returned to Cynthia.

Her cheeks were white. "I thought you'd drowned," she said.

He told of his discovery. "It's only a small hole," he explained, "but you can't miss it if you go deep enough. And once you're through, it's easy. Can you manage it?"

"I think so. I'll have to try, anyway."

"Good man!" Picking up his jacket, he took from the pocket a box of matches and a tobacco pouch of oiled silk. He dumped out the tobacco and wrapped the matches in its place. "We'll have to leave the lantern," he said, "but maybe I can keep these things dry."

CYNTHIA was tugging at her ring. When it came off, she held it out to him. "Will you carry this? I don't want to lose it in the water."

He balanced the circlet in his palm for a moment, then knotted it in a handkerchief and thrust it into his hip pocket.

Mark set the lantern on a shelf overlooking the water. "I'll go first," he said. "That way, I can have a light for you. Remember, swim deep and you won't lose time finding the opening. If you're not there in five minutes, I'll come looking for you. Luck!"

After a quick handclasp he cut the surface with a dive and struck out for the other passage. He found the hole more quickly this time, clambered through and came up on the far side.

A minute passed, and then another, while he waited for the ripple that would mark Cynthia's arrival. He struck a match and peered down, trying to estimate how long he'd been there. The match burned to his finger-tips and he dropped it, but there was still no sign of her.

He was poised to dive when he heard the water swirl a dozen feet away, and after that, a choking, desperate gasp.

No time for matches. Plunging towards the sound, he groped for a moment, then finding her, nearly exhausted, he was content to support her as long as she would let him. Her forehead was buried in his shoulder, and he could feel her heart pound against his chest. Finally she lifted her head.

"I'm glad you were here," she told him. "I was about done."

"I thought you'd missed it. Have trouble?"

"Plenty! I was winded before I found the hole."

Mark tightened his arm. "You got through, anyhow."

"I've had enough swimming," she admitted. "Let's find out where this goes."

"Right." Releasing her, he scratched another light. In the faint glow they could see the passage rising steeply ahead of them. They started forward.

They had to move slowly. The rock under their feet was slippery and uneven, and their path was strewn with stones that had fallen from the walls and ceiling.

Mark had no idea how far they had climbed—a mile, perhaps—when he sensed an obstruction in front of them. Touching Cynthia on the arm, he struck a match and peered ahead. Not twenty paces away, a wooden barricade stretched from one wall to the other.

"So!" Mark grunted. "If we can get through that, I think I'll know where we are."

"The boards look rotten."

"Here's hoping."

They hurried forward. When they reached the barrier, Mark handed Cynthia the matches and set his shoulder against the middle panel. It splintered easily. Pulling the broken pieces out of the way he attacked the boards on either side, and in a few minutes they had a hole large enough to climb through.

They found themselves in a cement-floored room, with double doors at one end and a rusted windlass in the centre. Mark glanced about.

"This would be the cellar," he nodded. "The stairs are over there." He pointed to a flight of wooden steps near the left-hand wall.

"Where are we?" Cynthia asked. "Unless I'm all wrong, we're underneath Herbert Mallinson's hunting lodge."

CYNTHIA stared. "You think Daddy knew about this?"

"I'm sure of it." Turning towards the stairs, he said, "Let's go up and see if there's a fireplace. We need to get dry."

The door at the top was unlocked, and they entered a small storeroom. There Mark found an oil lamp and a can of kerosene. When the light was going, he led the way through another door into the kitchen, and from there down a hallway to a tremendous living-room.

The place was furnished in red leather and mahogany, and over the fireplace hung a tapestry with a Gothic "M" in the centre. Mark's glance went to a pile of logs beside the hearth.

"That's what I want!"

In ten minutes he had a fire crackling up the chimney, and a settee drawn as close as they could stand it. He watched the flames for a while, and then turned to Cynthia.

"You see the story, don't you?"

Animal Antics



"BAH—I hate collectors!"

"Some of it, I think. I gather the mine's worthless."

"Quite worthless," he nodded. "There isn't an ounce of silver left. It's easy to guess what happened. Somehow Mallinson discovered that break in the rock stratum carrying the vein. Perhaps he just stumbled onto this end of it. Anyhow, he worked it from this direction without telling your father, and at the same time took his share from the partnership."

"When he realised the two workings were ready to meet, he sold out—probably thought your father would keep his mouth shut to avoid a family scandal. The hole we swam through is the point where the vein turned up and your father first learned he'd been swindled. That's why he closed the place and refused to sell it afterwards." Mark nudged the end of a log with his toe. "What will you do about that offer?"

"I'll refuse it, naturally."

"I thought you would," he said. "It's a hard luck, but the only thing to do." He reached into his hip pocket and brought out the wet handkerchief. Loosening the knot, he let the ring drop into his palm. "At least," he told her, "you have this."

Cynthia did not stir. Her eyes were bright and her lips were curved softly. "Will you keep it a while longer?" she asked. "I've got to be sure it reaches Gregory."

Mark bounded to his feet. "What do you mean?"

She unbuttoned a pocket in her blouse and drew out a folded square of paper, which she spread on the seat.

"A mine wasn't all I lost to-day," she said, looking up. "This came to the hotel before we left."

It was a telegram. Mark's eyes skimmed over the message. "If you persist in entering the Bonne Chance, our engagement is ended. Come home immediately." The name below was Gregory.

Mark knotted his handkerchief again. "The incredible fool!" he muttered. Then he gazed down at Cynthia. "You don't think you're done with mines and mining, do you?"

She blushed, but returned his glance lovingly and willingly.

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"A happy book about funny people"

By the author of Mrs. Wiggs

"Write me a book, you said, a happy book, about funny people. I have sought to do so."

With this dedication to a friend, Alice Hegan Rice, creator of the world-beloved Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch, introduces the first novel she has written for a number of years.

THE simple humor of Mrs. Wiggs has delighted hundreds of thousands of people for nearly thirty years. New editions of the book are still being published, and amateur elocutionists continue to impersonate her, with varying degrees of success.

It has been translated into six languages and adapted for the films.

Mrs. Rice's newest character, Ernie Bossel, may not usurp the throne of Mrs. Wiggs, but he is a worthy addition to her court.

Alice Hegan Rice retains the power to portray the philosophic courage and spontaneous wit of those who are poor in pocket but not in spirit.

"Our Ernie" is the hero of the happy-go-lucky Bossel family, which has managed to exist for years "with no more visible means of support than an air plant."

"Whatever sustenance it derived seemed to come from its own hilarious and highly congenial society."

The Bossel family consists of Grandpa Calloway, one-time ship's captain, and still an impressive, if irresponsible, figure in spite of financial vicissitudes; his one-armed son-in-law, Benjamin Bossel, a night-watchman with deep religious faith; and Benjamin's three motherless children—Curt, the financial mainstay of the family, Rosie a trained

nurse, and last but by no means least "Our Ernie."

"Our Ernie"—"Mellins food" to his young companions in Wirt's Division where the Bossels live—is an overgrown, fair-haired, blue-eyed youth of fourteen, frequently bumptious and a complete nuisance, but the undisputed occupant of the family spotlight.

IN spite of youthful irresponsibility Ernie dreams ambitious dreams of grandeur. His "invention" is to be the first step from poverty towards riches for himself and his family. The "invention" is a machine to twist pretzels.

Drama stalks into the crowded, untidily comfortable Bossel parlor in the first chapter.

Pop loses his job, Ernie decides to leave school and look for work. Ernie kisses a girl—Tilly Katzenbach, the tomboyish redhead next door—for the first time.

Grandpa, elegant and aloof from the family's worries, announces that he is going to marry Mrs. Myrtle, who runs the local beauty parlor.

To any member of a large family there is authenticity in Bossel family conversations.

"Where is the boy?" asked Grandpa.

"He's down in the cellar trying to yodel," said Pop.

"Tell him to come up here. I want to talk to him."

But when Ernie appeared it was difficult for the Captain to make



AGATHA CHRISTIE, famed writer of mystery stories, whose latest novel, "Ten Little Niggers," begins as a serial in *The Australian Women's Weekly* on January 27.

himself heard. The Bossels had a disconcerting way of carrying on a four-way conversation that made interruptions difficult.

ERNIE'S bid for fame and fortune starts modestly enough with an advertisement: "Need a Boy? That's me! Ernest Bossel. Jobs. Bicycle Errands. Dirty Work."

He is seventeen before he starts on a regular job. From a job at a petrol filling station his meteoric career soars to Peckham's pickle factory, where his indefatigable spirits and bright ideas win the confidence of Mr. Peckham, and his self-assured personality and good looks win the heart of Mr. Peckham's wallflower daughter.

But Ernie's heart had already been lost in the unromantic shade of the gasoline pump in highly romantic circumstances to a beautiful mystery girl who drove in for petrol.

Ernie's first call at the Peckham mansion—"all full of big things, crystal chandeliers, massive furniture, crimson draperies and Oriental decorations"—provides one of the high spots in hilarity.

"You couldn't find anything finer in the city," says the imposing Mr. Peckham. "A hotel up in Atlantic City was selling out, and I bought the whole shebang for five thousand dollars."

Mrs. Rice's capacity for humor brought close to life with occasional tears solves many problems.

After much laughter and tears there is a happy ending for everybody.

"Our Ernie," by Alice Hegan Rice (Hodder and Stoughton). Our copy from the publishers.



Good Girl

Continued from Page 13

"THERE'S a woman sick up the Blackwater trail, that's all," Michael said. "Dying, they think."

Joan was looking out of her window, too.

"Is there any other woman up there?" she said.

"No, there's just her husband," Michael said.

"Then I'll go with you," Joan said. "We can take Bertie's car."

The Blackwater trail was pretty terrible.

In about two hours we came to a little log cabin on the side of a hill. Michael knocked at the door, and a burly man opened it.

"I've phoned for Doctor Sutton," Michael said, "and these folks came along in case they could do something."

"I thought," Joan said, "a woman might help."

"That's mighty kind of you, lady," Joan went in. I stayed in the car, and Michael started to walk up and down restlessly.

It was daylight when the door opened again, and the doctor came out with Joan. She looked white and scared.

"It's all over," the doctor whispered to me. "This girl has had a pretty bad time. You'd better get her home. She's been a brick."

"You go on to the ranch—I can help a little here," Michael said.

"We'll wait for you at the ranch, Michael," I said. Joan smiled at him and then sort of shuddered.

It wasn't until we'd got in sight of the ranch that she spoke.

"Bertie," she said, "we've got to get out of here right away."

"But I promised we'd wait for Michael."

"We've got to get out of here," Joan said. "You'll change your mind when you feel better, Joan."

I was going to argue her out of it, until I looked at her face again.

"All right," I said.

So when we got to the ranch I threw our things into the grips, and Joan wrote a note to Michael.

After we'd started out, down by the river road, I said:

"This is the dirtiest trick I've ever played in my life. After all that boy has done for us. And him crazy about you, too."

"Don't you see—that's just it."

"That makes a lot of sense!"

"I couldn't—I just couldn't hurt him any more. Don't you understand now, Bertie? I couldn't see him again. Not after what happened to-night."

"To-night? What's that got to do with Michael and you?"

"That woman, just before she died, she looked up at me and smiled, and said, 'God bless you, you're a good girl.' That's a laugh—a good girl!"

SHE started to laugh, a crazy kind of laugh.

"Please, Joan," I said, but she went on speaking again as if she couldn't stop.

"Oh—she didn't mean it the way it seemed to me," she said. "But to call me that. 'Good girl!' And to say it then! That's what Michael thinks of me, too! So then I knew where I was. Everything seemed suddenly clear. I knew what I'd got to do. I didn't belong up there. Not in that house. Not with those people. Not with Michael. I might have once. But not now."

Out of the corner of my eye I could see two big tears starting down her face.

After a while I said:

"I understand now, Joan. I guess I've been pretty dumb. But you've got this thing all wrong. About Michael, I mean."

"Oh, let's forget it, Bertie! It's all over now."

"Now, listen. You can't leave it at that. You've been a little fool and made a mistake about one man—well, what's that amount to, anyway? None of us is a plaster saint—not even Michael. You haven't really changed since before you ever smelt Hollywood, Joan. Not in anything that matters."

"Oh, stop it!"

"You listen to me, young woman. Do you think Michael cares about all that? He knows what you're really like. Didn't he see you to-night with that poor woman? She knew what she was saying when she called you 'good girl,' Joan. You should have told him about that other man—about everything. And

what right did you have to go and tell him we were going to be married?"

"I meant it, Bertie. If you still want to."

"Well, that's a good one!"

"Don't, Bertie," she said, and slumped away down into the seat. "I'm too tired now."

I wanted to take her in my arms, but somehow I didn't. I was thinking of Michael back in his big house. After a while, Joan went to sleep in the corner of the seat. I stopped the car and lighted my pipe. I sat smoking there by the side of the road a long while. Slowly, so as not to wake her, I started the car.

When we stopped again Joan sat up quickly and looked around.

"Why, we're back at the ranch!" she said, kind of dazed.

"Yes," I said. "I forgot my shaving-brush."

I drove right up to the gate, by the little patch of grass and flowers.

"Here's where you get out," I said. "This is your house, lady."

"Are you crazy?" she said angrily. "I'm not getting out of this car!"

"Oh, yes, you are," I said. Before she could stop me, I opened the door and lifted her out.

"Let me down, you fool!"

She struggled in my arms, but I held her tight and carried her up the garden path between the little flower-beds. When I got to the porch, Michael was standing there.

"Michael," I said, "there seems to have been a mistake somewhere. But when she tells you the whole story, you'll understand everything. And now take her quickly. She's too darn heavy for an old man like me."

"Let me down, you idiot!" Joan whispered to me, and struggled again; but I hung on tight.

Michael tried to say something, and then his eyes went all misty, and he put out his arms and lifted Joan as if she were a baby. She wriggled a little at first, but as he carried her across the porch to the door she was suddenly still. And I remembered how Michael's grandpa had carried his bride over this same worn threshold, into that vast, jumbled house of the O'Gallihers.

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Make up your mind to-day that you are going to give your skin a real chance to get well. Never mind what caused it—you've probably been, like a lot of other people, convinced that the only thing to use was an ointment or salve (some of them are very good), but in the big majority of cases these sticky salves simply clog the pores, and the condition primarily remains the same.

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(This is a genuine untouched photograph of the hands of a martyr to rheumatism)

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Rheumatism is caused by weak kidneys failing to remove poisons and impurities from the system, especially uric acid which is deposited in the joints. Gradually the deposits of tiny razor-edged uric acid crystals grow until the joints become inflamed, stiff and enlarged—just like the rheumatic hands shown above. No wonder every movement is sheer agony, when those sharp uric acid crystals are tearing into tissue and bone.

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Royal Escape

Continued from Page 6

"YOU may not, but I have a better regard for my head," said the King frankly. "If you should be stopped upon the road and found to be beyond your boundaries a pretty coil we should be in!"

The Colonel was silenced. Bitterness at his helplessness welled up in him; he turned away, and walked over to the window, his face clouded and his mind much troubled. Philippe said with rough sympathy: "We live in noisome times, Colonel, but 'deed, it will not serve his Majesty to have you taken up in his company for a parole-breaker. There's another scheme which my lord is anxious his Majesty will comply with, but which is none of mine. He would have your Majesty ride before Mistress Juliana Coningsby, as you did before."

"He is right," said the Colonel briefly. "I am willing," the King replied, "but I'll not have Juliana constrained to go with me, mind!"

Juliana, however, needed no persuasion. She was no sooner asked if she would ride pillion again behind the King than she jumped up out of her chair, clapping her hands together, and exclaiming that there was nothing in the world she would like better.

It was decided that the King should leave Trent upon the following morning, and that Henry Peters should accompany the party, for the purpose of escorting Juliana home again from Salisbury, where she was to part from the King. Once more Charles bade farewell to the Wyndhams, bestowing upon the elder lady so fond an embrace that tears sprang to her eyes and trickled down the cheeks he kissed. "My dear boy—my blessed liege!" she whispered.

"Nay, I beseech you! Let it be my dear boy!" he said. "Indeed, I like it better."

She shook her head, clapping him in her arms once more before she could bear to let him go. He turned from her to her son, grasping both the Colonel's hands as if would, but I shall never forget. God be with you, my friend, and when next we meet may it be at Whitehall and I your host!"

He bowed over Mrs. Wyndham's hand with a grace startlingly at variance with his rough clothes and cropped hair, and in another few minutes was gone.

"I am more fortunate than my cousin, for I am still in your company," murmured Juliana, behind his shoulder.

"Do you count that good fortune, sweetheart? I had thought the good fortune was all upon my side."

"I shall not know how to support life when I come back to Trent," she said disconsolately. "Oh, it will be so flat and weary!"

He laughed. "Why, I think you flatter me! Or were you ambitious to play the heroine while I skulked in the secret place?"

She smiled, but said thoughtfully: "Jane Lane wept when she left us, and I wondered at her."

"Did she?" The image of Jane's sweet, grave face glimmered before his mind's eye. He remembered the steadfast look she had, and the cool touch of her lips on his. He hoped that she was safe at Bentley Hall, and suddenly felt impatient with the pretty, childish creature riding behind him. He turned his head towards Philippe, and began to ask him about the way they were to follow.

It was dusk when the King reached Heale. Colonel Phelps having represented to him in the strongest terms the folly of his passing through Salisbury, he had parted from Juliana at the village of Lower Woodford, less than a mile from Heale House. Juliana had wept a little, but the King, drying her cheeks with his own handkerchief, and planting the lightest of kisses on her mouth, had coaxed her back to smiles, bidding her look forward to the day when she would come to Court in her best gown, and find herself the prettiest lady there. He had exchanged horses then with Henry Peters, had lifted Juliana into the pillion with his own hands, and stood in the road with Colonel Phelps, to watch her ride away towards Salisbury.

The rest of the way to Heale led winding beside the river Avon and Heale House was situated with the river in its front, and a belt of tall cedar trees sheltering its garden.

Upon their arrival, their horses were taken in charge by a groom, and they were admitted at once into the house, and led across a wide, panelled hall to a parlor, where several persons were gathered round a small wood fire. An elderly lady, wearing widow's weeds, rose

at their entrance, and came forward to greet them. The Colonel, who had walked in before the King, bowed to her, and, having kissed her hand, begged leave to present his friend, Mr. Jackson. She turned towards the King with a pleasant smile, and held out her hand, saying: "I bid you welcome, sir, and am very glad to see you here."

The King pulled off his hat and took her hand in his to kiss it. He found that it was shaking, and, raising his head, saw that the smile had been wiped from her face, and that she was gazing at him as though he were a ghost. He said easily: "You are very good, madam. I warrant you, Robert Phelps and I are mighty glad to be here."

She moistened her lips. "Yes," she said. "Indeed, sir—" She broke off, and seemed to swallow some obstruction in her throat. "You must let me make you known to my sister, Mrs. Mary Tichborne, and my good brother-in-law, Sir Frederick Hyde, and Dr. Henchman here."

A YOUNGER woman, who bore a marked resemblance to the widow, curtled; Sir Frederick, who was shaking hands with Phelps, looked a little curiously at the shabby figure beside Mrs. Hyde, but bade him a civil good-evening. The King glanced beyond him towards Dr. Henchman, a twinkle in his eye.

Supper being presently announced, the company withdrew into an adjoining parlor, and sat down to table. Mrs. Hyde, after a moment's hesitation, asked Dr. Henchman to sit at her right hand. Her sister taking the other end of the table, the King chose a chair beside her, and began to converse with her in his pleasant, easy way.

Since she knew him to be a Cavalier travelling in disguise, she found nothing to astonish her in his air of breeding, and his knowledge of the world; but Sir Frederick Hyde, who was sitting on his sister-in-law's left hand, several times broke off his talk with Dr. Henchman to turn to look at the shabby stranger beside him.

When dinner was over, the gentlemen remained seated, drinking the table for some time, round the widow's excellent wine, and discoursing on a number of different topics.

Neither Colonel Phelps scowl nor Dr. Henchman's mild glance of warning had the desired effect of imposing silence upon the King, who bore his share in the conversation with an entire disregard for the incongruity of his servant's dress and well-informed speech. When he betrayed, by entering into an argument with Sir Frederick on the several ways of cooking partridges, that he had lived in foreign parts, Colonel Phelps abruptly put an end to any further disclosures by yawning loudly, and announcing that he for one was fagged, and would seek his chamber.

"And I daresay you will be glad of your bed too, Jackson," he said firmly.

This put Sir Frederick in mind of the time. He glanced at the clock over the fireplace, and at once got up, saying that he must take his leave of his good sister, if he was to reach his own home before dawn.

While he did so, the King was led by Mary Tichborne to a bedroom in the front of the house. It was a fair-sized apartment, hung with green damask, and furnished with a four-poster bed, two oak chests, and several chairs. Mistress Mary thought it a very good chamber for an ugly young man in a worn grey suit, and was startled, upon her going downstairs again, to be met by her sister, who asked her in an agitated voice where she had bestowed Mr. Jackson.

"Why, in the green bedroom, sister, as you bade me!" she replied, staring.

"No, no!" said Mrs. Hyde. "The crimson room, Mary! Stay, I will lay out the Holland sheets, and my best down pillow! Do you run and fetch the Spanish blankets out of the chest in my chamber. And the counterpane of crimson plush that is lined with taffeta, and the down pillows, mind!"

"Well," said her sister. "One would say you were making ready to receive the King at the very least."

Mrs. Hyde grasped her by the wrist. "Mary, he is the King!" she said in a shrill whisper.

Mrs. Mary Tichborne was so surprised that she felt quite faint, and had to lean against the balusters for support.

A FOOTSTEP on the landing above made her look up. Dr. Henchman had come out of the green bedroom, and began slowly to descend the staircase. She said in a hurried undertone: "I will lay out the sheets. Do you ask the doctor if it is indeed the King."

Dr. Henchman stood still to let her pass him on the stairs. His eyes surveyed her with a good deal of comprehension in their calm depths. As soon as she was out of sight, he went on down the stairs, and said with a slight smile to Mrs. Hyde: "I have been commanded to make known a very secret matter to you, madam, but I see that you have guessed it already."

She clasped her hands together. "Oh, yes, indeed I do understand, and not a word shall cross my lips! But such a wretched chamber as I have given him, and the bed stuffed only with hens' feathers! But the Holland sheets he must and shall have!"

"Will you come in to him?" Henchman asked. "I know nothing of sheets, nor he either, I daresay. But he wishes to speak privately with you."

The thick damask curtains in the green bedroom had been drawn across the windows and the candles lit. Their little tongues of flame cast the King's shadow grotesquely on the wall behind him, and touched one of the steel buttons on his coat with a pin-point of light.

The widow curtled deeply, the joints in her knees cracking. "Sir, you are very welcome, and I greatly honored," she said.

The King moved forward to raise her. "Did you know me at once, then? Was that why your hand trembled so in mine? Yet how could you do so? Have we met before? I do not think it."

"Nay, sire, but seven years ago I saw you ride past Salisbury with your Royal father. When I laid eyes on you this evening I recognised you at once, and was ready to drop where I stood, not having had the least suspicion that your Majesty was the gentleman Colonel Phelps was to bring to my house."

"Recognised me at once!" repeated the King. "Oh, this face of mine! It will undo me yet!"

Please turn to Page 40



I NEARLY LET THEM DOWN

Phillip Martin was well past middle-age but he was doing the work of two men.



BUT PHILLIP COULDN'T JUST SHAKE IT OFF FINALLY HE SAW HIS DOCTOR...

I FEEL SO TIRED ALL THE TIME DOCTOR. EVEN WAKE UP TIRED. CAN'T CONCENTRATE EITHER.

I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE GOING THROUGH, MR. MARTIN, THE STRAIN AND EVERYTHING. AND HERE'S ANOTHER THING. YOU'VE PROBABLY NEVER REALISED IT, BUT WHILE YOU SLEEP YOUR BODY GOES ON USING UP ENERGY TOO. HEARTBEATS AND BREATHING AND OTHER AUTOMATIC ACTIONS STILL GO ON, AND UNLESS ENERGY IS REPLACED DURING SLEEP, WELL, YOU'RE BOUND TO WAKE TIRED, FEEL WASHED OUT, THAT'S NIGHT STARVATION, AND I ADVISE YOU TO START DRINKING HORLICKS.

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A FEW WEEKS LATER



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Mandrake the Magician

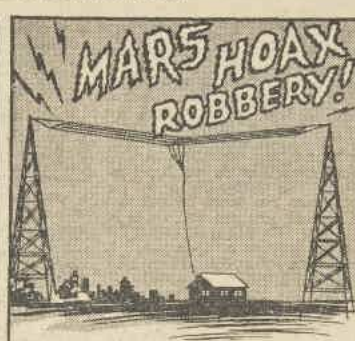


THE STORY SO FAR:

MANDRAKE: Master magician, with
LOTHAR: His giant Nubian servant, is at the home of
MR. ROCKS: A millionaire, whose safe is robbed of half a million dollars, bonds, and the jewels of
JANICE: His daughter. The culprits are a man and a woman passing themselves off as visitors from Mars. Mandrake manages to prevent the escape of the woman,

DORIS: Who confesses that she is an out-of-work dancer and that her companion was

THE KID GLOVE KID: Slickest crook on earth, who has duped her with a story of his reform and suggested the masquerade as a publicity stunt to boost her dancing. They landed on the Rocks' estate in an iron sphere and then he showed himself in his true colors. NOW READ ON.



"NOT in this house, sire," she said, holding herself very erect. "There is only one other who knows of your presence here, and that one is my sister, and she is as honest a woman as I am, and I will vouch for her."

Colonel Phelps, who had been standing by the bed, half-hidden from the widow by the folds of the curtains, stepped into the candlelight, saying in his forthright way: "The case is, madam, can you hide his Majesty so securely that none may get a sight of him?"

She replied without hesitation: "There is a secret place in the house, which few know of. It is hidden behind the wainscoting in a small chamber which we do not use in the general way."

"Softly, softly!" said the King. "It is not can you hide me, madam, but will you hide me?"

Her breast swelled; she lifted her chin. "It needs not to ask that question of one who bears the name of Hyde, sire."

He seemed to be a little amused, but he bowed with a kingly grace that matched her dignity. "Madam, I thank you! But will you not be seated? My good friend, Dr. Henchman, will tell us then what we must do, eh, doctor?"

"Sire, I do not sit while my King stands," she told him.

At that a laugh escaped him. "Do not use me with such ceremony, madam, for I am a very threadbare King, and one, moreover, that has no kingdom to reign over."

She let him lead her to a chair,

but said with a very speaking look cast up into his face: "Sire, that is not so, for you have a kingdom in the hearts of your loyal subjects, and there you will ever reign absolutely."

The laughter vanished from his eyes; a tinge of color stole into his lean cheeks; he raised her hand to his lips, and kissed it. "Madam, none has ever said a kinder thing to me than that, nor one more comfortable to mine ears in my present straits. Now, I pray you, Dr. Henchman, what's the news from my Lord Wilmot?"

"The marrow of the matter, sir, is this: that my lord has not yet been able to meet with Colonel Gounter, to whom, as Colonel Phelps will doubtless have told you, I had recommended him. But a young kinsman of the Colonel, one Thomas Gounter, to whom I made my lord known, under the name of Mr. Barlow, does positively expect to see the Colonel at his own house tomorrow, and thither will escort my lord. I do not doubt he will find the Colonel very apt and ready to serve you. He will send to tell me how the business progresses, and I, in my turn, will engage to keep your Majesty punctually informed."

"And your Majesty will stay hid in this house until we have all in train for your embarking for France," interpolated Phelps anxiously.

Upon the 7th October, the day fol-

Royal Escape

Continued from Page 38

lowing the King's arrival at Heale, Thomas Gounter arrived at Hinton Daubney, late in the afternoon, for the purpose of escorting my lord to Racton, which lay four miles from Chichester, and was the home of his kinsman, Colonel George Gounter. He found my lord in a fret of impatience, and was greeted by a testy demand to know what had made him so late.

Captain Gounter explained, for perhaps the fourth time, that since his kinsman was not expected to reach Racton until the evening no good purpose would be served by their making an early start.

Wilmot tried to curb his impatience, but soon fell to walking about the room, every now and then pulling out his watch to compare it with the bracket-clock on the mantelpiece. Captain Gounter, who would have been pleased to have smoked a pipe with Lawrence Hyde, decided, after a very little of this restlessness, that the only thing to be done was to set out for Racton at once and let Mr. Barlow do his pacing there.

Robert Swan, impassive as ever, rode with them, with my lord's yellow hair sumpter-trunk strapped on to the crupper behind him. The distance, which was less than ten miles, was soon covered, and the travellers came within sight of Colonel Gounter's house at a little before seven o'clock.

When the visitors entered the

house it was to find, as Tom Gounter had expected, that the Colonel had not returned yet, but he was looked for in an hour or so. His wife, a thin, anxious-eyed woman, seemed rather taken aback at the arrival of company.

She looked curiously at Wilmot, and, upon hearing that he wished most particularly to have speech with her husband, grew rather pale.

It was not until some time after eight o'clock that Colonel Gounter reached his home. He was met in the big, wainscoted hall by his wife, who had been preparing supper in the kitchen, with the assistance of Robert Swan. He looked up when he heard her footsteps, and smiled, and held out his hand. "All's well, Kate! You see before you a free man. What's the news with you, good sweetheart? Whose nags are those put up in our stable?"

She stood on tiptoe to embrace him, for he was a tall man. "It's your cousin, Tom Gounter, with a gentleman from Devonshire, who is wishful to have speech with you. But, oh, my dearest, my heart much misgives me, and I fear they mean to draw you into some dangerous coil of theirs!"

He gave her shoulder a little pat, and let her go, crossing the hall towards the parlor door; he came in, a soldierly figure, with a tanned face, a swift smile, and rather stern grey eyes. "Well, Tom! Give ye good den!" he said, shutting the door behind him. "You are come in a good hour, for I am just arrived from settling my plaguey affairs." He clasped his kinsman's hand, as he spoke, and looked keenly at Wilmot, who had risen from a chair on the opposite side of the wide fireplace.

My lord stood just outside, the circle of light cast by a branch of candles upon the table, but as Tom Gounter spoke his assumed name he moved alight, and the Colonel saw his face. A startled expression leapt to his eyes; he stood quite still for a moment, and then went up to my lord, saying: "You are very welcome, sir."

WILMOT took his hand, and contrived to draw him a little apart. "I see you know me," he muttered. "Do not own me?"

The Colonel cast a wondering glance at his cousin. Apparently he really was in ignorance of his old commander's identity, for his countenance was quite disinterested. So Gounter, with quick understanding, turned the conversation to general channels.

It was not until late that evening, when both Mrs. Gounter and Tom had retired, that he and Lord Wilmot could talk together.

Then the Colonel said abruptly: "My lord, how may I serve you? How do you come to be in my kinsman's company, and how is it possible that he knows you now?"

Wilmot hesitated for a moment, and then, drawing a long breath, blurted out: "Colonel Gounter! The King of England—my master, your master, the master of all good Englishmen—is near you, and in great distress."

His voice had risen; he broke off, shuddering. The Colonel repeated: "Tell me the whole, my lord."

His quiet, the firm note in his voice, seemed to inspire Wilmot with confidence. He raised his head from beneath his hands, and began to recount the King's adventures. He found the Colonel a silent, but a sympathetic listener, and was soon impelled to unburden his mind of its fears.

"He does not comprehend the dreadful burden which I must carry every moment of every day!" he said at the end. "But let that go; if I can bring him safely off I shall be content. Three times our plans have miscarried! Now I come to seek your aid, believing you to be one who can help the King to a boat, as knowing many seafaring men."

"My lord," the Colonel said seriously, "I will be very plain with you. For all I live so near the sea, I must believe there is no man living so little acquainted with this kind of men."

A groan broke from Wilmot. "O heaven! What to do, then?"

"Will you trust me? I give you my word that somehow I will acquit myself of this duty, and that with all possible expedition."

"But where will you go? How will you find an honest seaman?"

"Nay, my lord, leave that to me, and do you rest secure. You are overwatched and wearied out.

"IN the morning I will ride to the coast, to a little port called Ensworth, which is some two miles from this place. I shall go very early, and take with me only one John Day, that is a trusty man and a very loyal subject, and was formerly my servant. He is related to seamen of good account, and I think he may serve our turn. Your lordship must await me here. I will return to you as speedily as I can, I promise you."

It was with a sinking heart that Mrs. Gounter heard of her husband's enterprise, but she did her best to conceal her dread, and sped him on his way early next morning with resolute cheerfulness.

The Colonel's old servant, John Day, was delighted at receiving a visit from his master, but when the reason for it was disclosed to him his jaw dropped, and his eyes grew round with astonishment. He heard the tale out in complete silence, and for several moments after the Colonel had finished speaking said not a word, but stood staring.

Gounter said: "If the business mislakes you, stay you here, but tell me what seafaring men you know that are honest!"

"Nay, nay, if it's for the King I'll go through with it gladly!" Day declared. "But if there is any seafaring rony of mine which has his ship lying up at Ensworth, I know not, nor if such would come up to squeeze neither."

The day was cloudy, and when they reached the bleak little port a boisterous wind was whipping into a surge of grey billows the long tongue of sea that licked the land. A few cottages and a squat ale-house were the only houses Ensworth boasted, nor were there many vessels riding at anchor in the harbor. While the Colonel smoked a pipe in the ale-house, John Day went out to discover whether any of his acquaintances were to be met with. He returned presently, wearing a glum look on his face, and informed the Colonel that there was no ship at present lying in the harbor whose master he durst trust.

He suggested that they should ride on westward to Langstone, a port south of Havant, and there try their fortune; but although Gounter thought this advice good he determined to go back first to Racton, to acquaint my Lord Wilmot of his intention. As it chanced, he met Wilmot half a mile from Racton, coming, with Robert Swan, to search for him.

"You were so long gone I feared some mischance!" Wilmot told him.

He seemed, however, to be satisfied with the arrangements on hand, and rode for some time beside the Colonel in apparent peace of mind. But presently, putting his hand into his pocket to pull out his handkerchief, he discovered that the purse containing Giles Strangways' broad pieces was not there. He reined in immediately, pale with dismay, exclaiming that he had left a hundred pounds belonging to the King under his pillow. Nothing would do, in spite of the Colonel's assurance that his wife would by this time have found the purse, and would keep it safely for him, but that Robert Swan should return instantly to Racton to look for it.

But this was of no account compared with the misfortunes which followed. There was no likely vessel lying in Langstone harbor, nor could Day, while his master and my lord consumed a dish of oysters in a tavern by the sea, discover any trustworthy mariner in the town.

To be concluded

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THE HOMEMAKER

January 13, 1940

The Australian Women's Weekly

First Page

For beauty's sake . . .

Do RELAX!

REST for body and mind . . . sufficient of it to refresh worn, tired nerves . . . the right kind to enliven your spirits . . . will help to keep you young, your face unlined, and your personality charming.

By
JANETTE



HERE'S ONE way of relaxing. This young lovely dons a comfortable slack suit and rests in the garden on an inviting lounge with a book to keep her company.

"RELAX," say the doctors, "if you want to be healthy." "Relax," say the physical education experts, "if you want a strong, graceful body." And "Relax, oh please relax!" say the beauty specialists, "if you want to keep the wrinkles at bay."

But there are different ways of relaxing. Some folk like quiet and repose. Others like exercise. If you find your best relaxation is grubbing in the garden, or reading a few chapters of a novel, you'll be wise to follow your inclination.

If you want just to flop and let the world go hang, then do it. Don't be persuaded that it will do you more good to be having a set of tennis.

Your relaxing moments should be something different from your usual activity to be really beneficial. If you spend most of the day dawdling, then you need something strenuous for a change.

There are certain times when relaxing will do you a world of good. Before some important date, when you feel a little nervous and jittery, take five minutes off to flop down somewhere flat on your back and just relax. It will give you fresh energy and confidence and add poise to your grooming if you're tired and have to keep on. Much of the tiredness of modern life is due to tension, and you'll find yourself refreshed if you can "let go" for a few minutes mentally and physically.

"Rest periods"

AND those days when everything goes wrong, when you're rushed for time and feel "churned up" inside as the precious minutes rush by—then you simply must take yourself firmly in hand and relax for a few minutes.

It may seem madness—"I haven't a moment to spare," you object. But it'll be a time-saver in the long run.

When you get up from your brief rest things will have sorted themselves out and you find what you want without any of the previous fluster and scurry.

The busy housewife, with a day

full of household and family chores, will benefit, too, from time set aside for her own relaxation.

Time just for you . . . no darned socks, no planning the evening's menu. Treat yourself to being lazy. Not selfishly so.

Science has proved the value of "rest periods" for workers in industry. This is merely applying science to the household. You'll do your work better if you devote a few minutes each day to yourself alone. It's a matter of preference whether you lie down or whether you dawdle for a while over a cup of tea and a book.

The first requisite for really entering into the spirit of doing nothing is to be clad in garments that will help you to flop. No frills or tight lacing. Loose, comfortable garments are the best . . . but not the untidy soiled kind, for the resulting inferiority complex will undo any beneficial effects that the dawdling should be having on your ego.

Slacks are probably the best costume evolved to date for casual lounging. Have you noticed that when film stars are snapped by the cameraman in their leisure moments they are usually wearing some variation of the slack theme, ranging from little-boy shorts to glamorous hostess pyjamas?

To dispel tension

AND film stars should know. They are people who realise the importance of proper relaxation between their hectic bouts of work; and they can afford to buy the best that is available in the way of lounging outfits.

So I advise you to follow their lead and slip into slacks for outdoor lounging, or pretty pyjamas or tea-gown when you're following an indoor routine.

When you settle down to relax, see that your whole body is free of tension. A good way to ensure this is to stretch arms and legs as far as you can, and then let them flop. Do this several times.

Then shrug your shoulders vigorously up and down. This will take out any stiffness of the shoulders.

To relax the neck and throat, move your head backwards and forwards slowly as far as it will go, and then from side to side. You'll be amazed how this seems to "oil" the muscles

and remove unsuspected tenseness.

If your hands feel jumpy, stretch the fingers out as far as they will go, and then let them go limp. Do this every time you notice any stiffening of the muscles.

Can you relax when you're travelling in a train or tram? Watch the travellers next time you are in one, and you'll see that many of them are not resting. Sitting bolt upright, fingers playing, faces set grimly, feet nervously tapping—unnecessarily tensed up and wasting valuable energy. When travelling use it for a relaxation period. Let your hands repose quietly, sit comfortably, but not hunched up, relax the muscles of your face. Do this and you'll feel refreshed after your journey.

Luxury bath

A WARM bath is one of the best ways to relax thoroughly. You'll buck up amazingly if you give yourself a few small treats in your personal life that add a spice of glamor. Buy some perfumed salts for your bath, or better still, buy the makings of one of those amazing and amusing foam baths that give the sensation of sinking into clouds.

It's psychologically impossible not to relax in these.

And if you live far away from such shop luxuries, you can hunt round your garden for nature's own glamor secrets. A bunch of pine needles tied up in a pretty piece of muslin and held over the running bath water will make you feel like a pampered princess.

Try some new hair-dos. Comb your hair up if you usually wear it down, or sideways if you have it up. You'll see lots of exciting new faces peeping out of the mirror at you.

Gather some rosemary and lavender and hide it in the linen closets among the sheets and pillows, so that when next you go to bed feeling tired and discouraged the faint fragrance will lull you to happy thoughts.

Stroll round the garden and look at the flowers and trees . . . just for the refreshing beauty of them.

Search for fresh blooms to pin on your frock by day or night. Fresh flowers are a marvellous pick-me-up.



"Damp-Set" your hair with Velmol

IT works on hair of any texture . . . On any wave, natural or permanent . . . and takes but four minutes! It's the marvellous new way to "damp-set" your hair in deep, firm, sparkling waves or curls—and save many shillings, and many hours of time.

And it's so easy! All you need is brush, comb, and a little VELMOL. (A bottle is only 2/- at any chemist, or toilet counter.)

No more need to bunch hair under nets—"Damp-setting" keeps hair fastidiously fresh . . . keeps waves so firm and neat . . . yet never "stiff" or "greasy."

Holds finger-wave for days. Makes 'perm.' last a lot longer.

By
OUR HOME
DECORATOR



DINING-ROOM SETTING. Furniture of Swedish design, simple in line. Emphasis is placed on color, vivid tones of red and green being combined with beige.

EXHIBITS from many countries in a recent exhibition in America offer homemakers many new ideas.

The picture above shows a dining-room setting, actually part of a large living-room, in which the beautiful proportions of the Swedish furniture are unusually striking.

Simplicity of form in the furniture has

enabled the designer to lay emphasis on color and texture.

Chairs and stools are upholstered in platted leather in a dull green tone. The lacquer-red of the smooth-topped table provides a vivid color accent.

Soft beige is the color of the thick, hand-woven wool carpet, and beige is repeated in the wide stripes of the dark green and beige settee seen in the background.

Notice the modern form of the soup-bowl and plates of delicately-grained wood.

Startling Changes in MODERN HOME DECOR

EXHIBITS at a recent international exhibition in America reveal some extraordinary deviations from the accepted form of home decoration



SLEEPING ALCOVE in a large bed-sitting-room. The main feature in this unusual room is the wall finish in a tile effect with hand-painted motifs of leaves and flowers.

Of Swedish design is a bedroom in a small country house. The photograph on the right shows the sleeping alcove of this large room which is also used as a sitting-room.

Immediately attracting the eye by its novelty is the wall treatment, where a galaxy of flowers painted on delicately-tinted tiles makes an ingenious wallpaper-cum-picture-gallery. The exquisite pictures of flowers, ferns and field grasses—no two are alike—are hand-painted on the tiles, and provide a source of never-ending interest.

The bed is also unusual with its head and foot of canework. It is lacquered a brilliant red.

A significant trend in modern furnishings is the use of hand-made objects in conjunction with machine-made articles, and this room illustrates a pleasing combination of the two.

The small tables and lamp are functionally simple in design, made for efficiency and comfort, and also artistic in their graceful proportions.

Help! NATURE NEEDS YOUR URGENT AID!



A child's cry is Nature's warning. It's a sure sign there's something wrong . . . and often that "something" is Faulty Elimination.

Faulty Elimination means incomplete bowel action—a condition which causes untold distress to the sufferer, but which can be corrected quickly, effectively and pleasantly with a short course of Laxettes, the mild chocolate aperient that surely but safely restores natural bowel action.

Cranky Fits—Crying—Temper—all are signs of Faulty Elimination

Faulty Elimination is one of the most worrying of all childhood complaints because it can so easily be unsuspected. Often a child—or an adult—can appear to be perfectly regular in his habits but still be suffering the insidious ill-effects of incomplete bowel action. Dangerous food waste is left in the system, to poison the bloodstream—over-tax liver and kidneys—and bring ill-health in its wake.

But the remedy is close at hand in Laxettes—the perfect chocolate aperient. Laxettes, and Laxettes alone, ensure perfect natural action of the bowels without griping or purging. They are absolutely free from habit forming drugs and harsh purgatives.

Genuine Laxettes are sold and recommended by all chemists and stores—stocked factory fresh in handy tins: 16, the standard size; 6d, the trial size. Ask for Laxettes always by name.



LAXETTES

Correct Faulty Elimination

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BRIGHTEN CHAIRS,
CUPBOARDS,
ICE CHESTS



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TO DO EVERYTHING

TRICKS WITH
CANISTERS,
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IN FULL COLOR

EXCITING IDEAS
FOR TABLES,
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WOODWORK



THIS ENTIRE BOOK
IS GIVEN OVER TO
FASCINATING IDEAS
FOR DECORATING
YOUR KITCHEN

Quickly! Easily!
Inexpensively!

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Enclosed is 1d. in stamps (to cover
cost of postage and handling) for
your new book, "Harmony in the
Kitchen."

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ADDRESS

420

You can now sow these COLORFUL NEWCOMERS

SEED sowing time is here and the real dyed-in-the-wool gardener has a busy time in front of her (or him) if the flower beds are to be bright and resplendent next season. Catalogues must be studied, too, for details about new plants and flowers.

—Says THE OLD GARDENER.



THE NEW primula malacoides, Mauve Queen, the latest introduction to the gardening world in this type of plant. The blooms of this variety are much bigger and richer in color than those of the older malacoides.

BROWSING through the new season's catalogues I came across a host of new and lovely things that made me long to get busy and do something about acquiring some of these garden gems for myself.

One of the loveliest is the new sweet pea, named Pink Bonnet, but I found when I tried to get seeds that they were not yet available, much to my disappointment.

But don't let that deter you, for you may be luckier than I have been; your local seedman may have supplies on hand.

IF YOU would produce dahlias like these magnificent blooms then you must begin disbudding—remembering that quantity must be sacrificed if quality is required. Tie all happy growths firmly to stakes, too.

The flowers illustrated in the colored picture were easily 13 inches across, and the shade of pink deep rose shell tone.

Next in the catalogue I noticed a new primula malacoides known as Mauve Queen. The flowers of this new variety are much bigger than the old malacoides, and the color, according to the catalogue compiler, is deeper and lasts better when the weather warms up.

That fading habit of the primulas is one of the weaknesses of the species, therefore the newcomer will prove very popular.

I also came across a new anthurium, named Apricot, and the name describes the color. It is one of the short types, does not develop long legs, and should be very useful for bedding purposes.

I like snapdragons, to give them their common name, because they are "cut and flower again" plants. The more you rob the plants of their flowers, the more they seem to produce, and if you pick out the first bud that forms, forcing them to develop lateral growth, they develop a shrubbiness and bushy type of plant that will carry much bigger crops.

And for the first time I was introduced to a new family of annual hollyhocks, named by seedsmen in England, who produced them, as Indian Spring Stars.

New flowers

SO far only two colors, pink and carmine, have been produced, but if I can sow seed of hollyhocks and get flowers within 12 months, instead of having to wait two years, the pleasure will be all mine.

Next I came across a new eschscholzia (California poppy) named Cherry Pie. The flowers are a lovely shade of deep carmine and the blooms are three inches across.

I sent overseas for some seed of that variety for I could not get them locally, but I understand that they will be on hand in plenty of time for autumn sowing at most big seed-stores throughout Australia.

Californian poppies are available in a wide range of colors, going back to the lovely mandarin-yellow (the original) and from then on to many shades of tango, crimson, maroon and pink.

Any fairly rich soil will suit this plant, which flowers for months of the year and makes a glorious splash of color when massed in one big bed.

I am going to sow seed of the English cornflower this month, for they provide plenty of flowers for cutting during the cold months of

the year, and winter cornflowers miss the aphids which always ruins them in warm weather.

Two new cornflowers came my way via that catalogue, Lilac Lady and Jubilee Gem, and I hope to have a bed of each.

Godetias have come into their own in recent years since plant-breeders took them in hand as a worth-while flower. Two new varieties of distinct merit were shown at last year's Royal Show in Sydney, Orange Glory and Carmine Glow, and I found them both very ornamental and useful for cutting.

Carmine Glow is a double-flowered alyssum type, of bushy habit, about one foot tall, and the attractive flowers have wavy petals.

Pale violet

TWO other new flowers I want to recommend are alyssum Violet Queen, a very colorful sister to the old white sweet alyssum, and ageratum King of the Blues.

That new alyssum is of an attractive pale violet color, and it grows in masses in the border edges just like its older and better-known sister plant.

The new ageratum is only a few inches high, but the color is a very deep blue, the flowers are big and fluffy, and they are sweetly fragrant like the old and bigger ageratum.

Talking of massed beds reminds me of the claims of that seldom seen flower, the dainty torenia. This, too, is a dwarf, free-blooming, edging plant, and one that deserves greater recognition.

The variety torenia fourieri has purple blotches in the throat. It will flower quite satisfactorily in half shade or slightly moist corners, and if sown now will blossom well into autumn.

I can also recommend for sowing now the dwarf zinnia linearis, which is the freest flowering of this very versatile family. Planted in front of torenia, the purples and the bronze-yellow contrast strongly and satisfactorily.

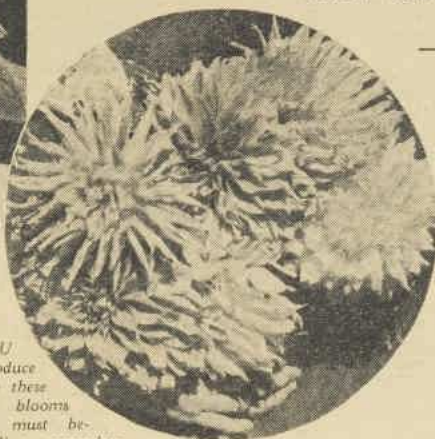
Asters, too

AND let me suggest that you make a final sowing of asters now, for they will bloom well into the cold weather.

I believe in getting all the pleasure out of a garden possible in the autumn, and few plants provide more color than the Tasmanian branching asters, the Crego types, and the lovely purple Emperors.

And gardeners must pay considerable attention to their dahlias just now.

They require plenty of water and good food at this time of the year, for they are growing rapidly and draw very heavily upon what is in the soil.



Shu-Milk removes the dirt and grease (doesn't just cover up the marks).

Shu-Milk dries quickly and evenly (it cannot "cake" or harden the shoe fabric).

Shu-Milk gives your shoes a soft, snow-white smartness that makes you really proud of them.

Use Shu-Milk for canvas, nubuck, kid, suede, calf or fabric shoes, bag, belts, gloves and sun helmets. There's a large bottle for the home and a small bottle for the handbag, at all stores.



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Larola cleanses, cools, beautifies and restores natural skin beauty. Soothing for sunburn — invaluable in the nursery. Larola has been in daily use for over 80 years.

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SURFER'S FOOT
is RINGWORM
Treat it as such
with **IODEX**

If the skin between your toes is red and itchy or has turned dead-white, moist and pulpy, it may be Surfer's Foot. If neglected you will carry this infection wherever you go barefoot and you may infect your family and friends. Treat this stubborn infection with Iodex, which kills the fungus and quickly soothes and heals the damaged tissues. Used by doctors all over the world.

From all Chemists **PRICE 2/-**
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Friday night is AMAMI night

AMAMI is the luxury shampoo, used regularly by millions of attractive women. Amami No. 1 for Brunettes. Amami No. 2 for Blondes. Obtainable at chemists and stores. If any difficulty, please write to: Geo. Ripley & Co. Pty. Ltd., Macdonell House, Pitt Street, Sydney.

AMAMI SHAMPOOS

WRITTEN IN THE STARS

ASTROLOGY BY JUNE MARSDEN

President Australian Astrological Research Society

Capricornians work hard and like to tell the world about it!

CAPRICORN — people born between December 22 and January 20—are not boasters in the general sense. It is just that they are anxious that the world should praise them.

The Capricorn child should therefore be reared with more than usual care. His failings should be fully understood and corrections made at an age when he is malleable.

Once he grows independent of authority, he develops very fixed ideas about himself and his abilities, and he is difficult to dissuade from any pre-determined mode of life or style of self-expression.

What is more, his dignity is of such importance to his self-respect that he finds it difficult to retract from any stand he has once taken.

Then, for good measure, the in-born Capricornian shrewdness and native wisdom are brought to bear on the matter, with the result that

the final decision will usually withstand the criticism and judgment of seemingly more brilliant people.

Consequently, it is easy to appreciate the necessity for rearing these children with extreme care. They must be taught that other people have opinions and ideals and that these may clash with those of the Capricornian and still be correct.

They should be taught that to become dogmatic is to endanger the friendship and respect of others, and that their own ideals and emotions (often of a religious nature) can achieve best results by following their own individual path and being kept on a practical basis.

The average Capricornian has an economical streak from birth. This trait is admirable if kept to a common-sense level, but when economy becomes blood-brother to meanness life can become a misery not only for those who must depend upon him, but also for the Capricornian himself.

The Daily Diary

UTILISE the following information in your daily affairs. It should be interesting.

ARIES (March 21 to April 21): Your stars do not favor you very much, especially those born near April 17.

TAURUS (April 21 to May 21): Make the most of January 18 (after 1 p.m.), 19 and 20.

GEMINI (May 22 to June 22): Plan ahead. Your stars are coming your way.

CANCER (June 22 to July 22): Use extraordinary caution and dodge trouble of all kinds. Keep out of arguments, avoid changes and partings, be careful of money and possessions.

LEO (July 23 to August 23): Get important matters started unless they can wait several weeks. January 16, 17, and 18 (after 1 p.m.) are fair.

VIRGO (August 24 to September 23): Use all your native wit to put you ahead for your stars will be on the side of most Virgians at this time.

LIBRA (September 23 to October 24): Look ahead and begin to plan for the things you want to start. Meanwhile, let routine suffice.

SCORPIO (October 24 to November 23): Quite fair for you on January 13 (p.m.), 14 and 15.

SAGITTARIUS (November 23 to December 22): Just a week of days.

CAPRICORN (December 23 to January 20): Keep a step ahead of yourself on January 18 (after noon), 19 and 20, for fortune can smile on many Capricornians' ambitions at that time.

AQUARIUS (January 20 to February 19): Good days for planning ahead, for your stars will soon be favoring you.

PISCES (February 19 to March 21): Many wise and lively Pisceans will find that they can turn the planetary radiations of January 13 (after 1 p.m., only) 14 and 15 to very fair account.

The Australian Women's Weekly presents this series of articles on astrology as a matter of interest, without accepting responsibility for the statements contained in them. June Marsden regrets that she is unable to answer any letters.—Editor, A.W.W.



IT'S A DAILY routine for Ann Miller, RKO dancer, to take limbering up and slimming exercises. Here you see her in the garden of her Hollywood home.

WHAT MY PATIENTS ASK ME

By A DOCTOR

If You Must Slim Then do it the scientific way

PATIENT: I have no appetite these days, and I'm so weak I'm ashamed of myself. Also, I'm losing more weight than I set out to lose when I went on a slimming diet. Do you think there is anything seriously wrong with me?

Doctor: This and similar troubles are frequently heard these days by medical men as the result of drastic slimming diets, which so often lead to all sorts of troubles, including complete disorder of the digestive system.

Many a girl of 17 or 18 feels unhappy because she is overweight, but she can comfort herself with the knowledge that it is "baby" fat, and that she will lose it as a matter of course as the years go by, and she gets into her twenties.

The growing girl should never in any circumstances attempt to diet. Dieting—by which is meant food reduction—is full of dangers, some serious, others less so.

A starvation diet can cause nervous collapse or sometimes heart attacks.

Lack of proper protective and nutritive foods lay the health open to the over-present germs that are all around us.

Good resistance

THE protective foods furnish you with your resistance to disease, and if these foods are cut out (as they often are in dieting) your body is starved of its essential nourishment and it cannot hope to put up a good defence against invading disease organisms.

Statistics show that tuberculosis takes its greatest toll between the ages of 18 and 25—of young women mostly—and many of these young people were not eating sufficient of the protective foods.

This does not mean that dieting was the direct cause. The tubercle bacillus is responsible for the damage and it is the process of slimming which prepares the body for its successful invasion.

Some diets rely on bulk which gives the sensation of having had a great deal of food. These certainly over a period of time upset the digestive system.

Other diets cut out butter, which deprives the body of very necessary fat which, even if reducing, you must have.

Further, one diet which may suit one person may be entirely unsuitable for you.

Before attempting to slim you should make sure you are really overweight.

Many women imagine they are overweight when they are healthily normal.

However, if you do decide you want to be thinner, don't start by blindly following some diet you've read about; one that was successful with a friend of yours; or by cutting out foods you have been used to eating all at once.

You may omit the very foods which are essential to your type of constitution and which keep you in good health.

Go to your doctor and get him to draw up a list of the foods you should have for breakfast, lunch and dinner. He will know what you should eat and what you may cut out with safety to your health.

The normally active woman, however, is rarely too fat. If she is and her condition responds to no dieting whatever, it is possibly a question of glandular trouble, and medical aid must be enlisted.

It is usually the idle person or the sedentary worker who is worried over the problem of reducing.

Exercise is the safest remedy to adopt, and plenty of walking will work wonders.

Skipping is one of the best reducing exercises, and has the advantage of being a pleasant exercise.

Skipping also prevents that stiffness in the joints that besets many middle-aged people who are beginning to be troubled with "middle-aged spread."

One well-known doctor treats cases of stiffness in the joints by advising his patients to dance Highland reels and sword dances for five minutes night and morning, dressed only in pyjamas or undershirts.

Sedentary workers, whose jobs prevent them from moving round much in the daytime, often find themselves putting on weight over the waist and hips.

Except under doctor's orders, don't diet for this condition. Regular daily exercises for hips and thighs will soon remedy these figure faults and improve the health at the same time.

For young wives and mothers

TRUBY KING SYSTEM

BABY'S MENTAL HEALTH

MANY of the things that bring about good physical health in the young baby fortunately also bring about good mental health.

The baby's first two years are among the most important years of his life, and in this period his brain has grown more than it will in the rest of life.

Many adults do not grasp the significance of over-stimulating the sensitive active mechanism of the little brain. They often play with and entertain a young baby until it is over-tired to the stage of exhaustion, instead of letting the young infant amuse itself and play with its own fingers and toes, and its own little playthings until it becomes just naturally tired and falls to sleep.

A leaflet dealing with this subject has been prepared by The Australian Women's Weekly Mothercraft Service Bureau.

Any reader interested can obtain this leaflet free of cost by sending a request with a stamped addressed envelope to The Australian Women's Weekly, Box 4299 Y.Y., G.P.O., Sydney.

Please endorse your envelope. "Mothercraft."

HEY! THE WOMENS WEEKLY TELEGRAPH BLOKES HAVE PUBLISHED A BUNCH OF ARTICLES BY ME AND CALLED IT "LOWERITIS" I MIGHT GET A CUT ON EVERY ONE SOLD... SO HOW ABOUT IT? LENNIE

IF YOU LIKE LOWER..

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An amazing new discovery in face powders. A wonderful new ingredient which beautifies the skin is skillfully blended with the finest silk-sifted powder. Gives a new life and radiance to the skin. Makes a sallow, dull complexion glow with youthful, natural colour. And makes the powder stay on twice as long. This amazing ingredient is called "Mousse of Cream". It can be obtained only in the new Poudre Tokalon (patent process).

A TRULY SENSATIONAL OFFER
Powder one half of your face with Tokalon "Mousse of Cream" powder. Powder the other half with any ordinary face powder. If the "Mousse of Cream" side does not look fresher, younger, lovelier than the other, we will refund you in full the purchase price of your Poudre Tokalon. Poudre Tokalon is made in eleven new shades—the very latest from Paris. Obtainable at all Chemists and Stores.

Actress Gives Recipe for Grey Hair

Miss Nancie Stewart, Well-Known Actress, Tells How to Darken Grey Hair With Simple Home-Made Mixture.

Miss Nancie Stewart, talented Australian actress—whose artistry has won her many prominent theatrical roles—gives the following advice on grey hair and how to darken it: "Anyone can prepare a simple mixture at home that will darken grey hair and make it soft and glossy. To a half-pint of water add one ounce of Bay Rum, a quarter-ounce box of Orizol Compound and 1 ounce Glycerine. These ingredients can be bought at any chemist's at very little cost. Apply to the hair twice a week until the desired shade is obtained. This should make a grey-haired person appear 10 to 20 years younger. It does not discolour the scalp, is not sticky or greasy, and does not rub off."

Simple Way To Lift Corns Right Out

No excuse for cutting corns

Tender corns, tough corns, or soft corns can now be safely lifted out with the finger-tips, thanks to Frozol-Ice, says grateful user. Only a few drops of Frozol-Ice, the new-type antiseptic treatment, which you can get for 1/6 at any chemist or store, is ample to free one's feet from every corn or callus without hurting. This wonderful and safe remover stops pain instantly, and does not spread on to surrounding healthy tissue. Frozol-Ice is a boon to corn-burdened men and women.

NEEDLEWORK otions

Work this attractive Luncheon set

YOU can obtain this unusually lovely luncheon set from our Needlework Department traced ready for working on white, cream, blue, pink, yellow or green sheer linen, or on white, blue, yellow or green organdie.

The centre mat measures 17 by 17 inches; the large plate mats 8 by 11 inches; the small mats 5 by 5 inches; serviettes 11 by 11 inches.

Prices are:

Nine-piece set, including one centre, four large plate mats and four small plate mats, 3/9 complete.

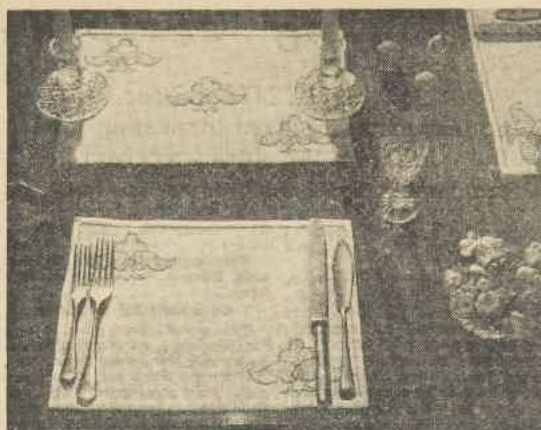
Thirteen-piece set, including one centre, six large plate mats and six small plate mats, price 8/3.

Serviettes to match, 1/- each.

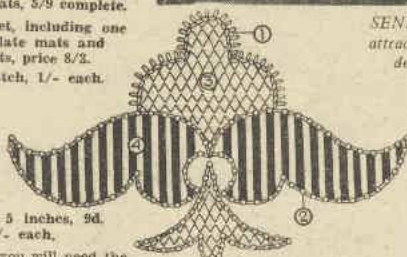
Bought separately, prices are:

Centre, 17 by 17 inches, 2/6; plate mats, 8 by 11 inches, 1/- each; small mats, 5 by 5 inches, 9d each; serviettes, 1/- each.

To work the set you will need the following Anchor stranded cottons: Three skeins F774 (mid glacier green); 1 skein each F547 (light



SEND IN AN order now for this attractive luncheon set in a conventional design worked in green and blue.



- ① 606 - F - Blanket St.
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- ③ 547 - AP - Drawn Tilling St.
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THESE DIAGRAMS show you the colors to use and kind of stitches in embroidering the luncheon mats. Hems are slip-stitched.

Dainty collar and cuffs

JUST what you want to freshen up last season's frock—a collar and cuffs set. The set is obtainable from our Needlework Department traced for working on white, cream, blue, yellow, pink or green sheer linen, or on white, blue, yellow or green organdie.

Price is 1/6 complete set, postage free. Edges are worked in button-hole-stitch and flowers in satin-stitch. The original was

worked in shades of blue, but you could do the embroidery in any color you fancy for equally attractive effects.

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PATTERNS of this dainty collar and cuffs set are obtainable from our Needlework Department.

PILLOW COVER AND SHEET

BOTH are obtainable from our Needlework Department traced on white, blue, pink, green or salmon sheer linen.

Pillow cover, which measures 12 by 18 inches when completed, is traced with design, while pattern is also marked for cutting out and making up when embroidery is finished. Edges spoke-stitched for crocheted finish. Price, 2/11.

Sheer linen sheet also traced for working measures 24 by 36 inches and is 3/6, postage free.



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Dear Dorothy Dix—Can you help me analyze my problem? I am young, dress well, I am not unattractive, I dance well and I love to dance, but boys just do not ask me to dances and I do not know why.

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More prizewinning recipes

THIS week first prize of £1 goes to a reader for her recipe for Dutch Ground Walnut Cake—an unusual but delicious mixture.

Other recipes also worth trying out have been awarded consolation prizes of 2/6 each. They are given below.

You, too, can enter this fascinating weekly competition. It's so simple. Just write out your favorite recipe, give your name and address, and send in this office.

Every week first prize of £1 is awarded for the best recipe, and 2/6 consolation prize is awarded for every other recipe published.

DUTCH GROUND WALNUT CAKE

Quarter-pound walnuts, 2 tablespoons whisky, 6oz. butter, 6oz. sugar, 5 eggs, 1lb. plain flour, 1 teaspoon baking powder, pinch salt, 1lb. preserved ginger, chocolate icing.

SELECTED by our cookery expert as the most interesting for the week from the entries received in our weekly best recipe competition.

Cover walnuts with 1oz. sugar and whisky and stand dish aside for half an hour or so.

Beat butter with 5oz. sugar to a cream. Add whisky-soaked walnuts. Beat again, then add well-beaten eggs. Beat smooth. Add flour, salt, and baking-powder all sifted together. Mix in carefully preserved ginger which has been finely chopped. Bake in a moderate oven in square or round tin for three-quarters of an hour.

When cold, ice with chocolate icing (vanilla flavor), and decorate top with bits of chopped walnuts.

(If unable to procure ground walnuts, buy 1lb. shelled walnuts and mince them or chop finely before covering with the sugar and whisky.

They absorb the liquid just the same.)

First Prize of £1 to Mrs. D. Richards, Hanson Tee, Toombul, Brisbane.

GOOSEBERRY SOUFFLE

One pound gooseberries, 3 eggs, 1oz. gelatine, a few drops cochineal, 1 pint milk, 4oz. castor sugar.

Whip egg-whites and yolks separately. Stew gooseberries with a very little water to keep them from sticking. When quite soft, rub through a sieve and stir in sugar. Dissolve



CHOCOLATE layer cake made from American three-minute cake mixture. Recipe for making three-minute cake is given on this page. The mixture can be used for a variety of layer cakes.



DOESN'T this ice-cream look inviting? It's home-made from a recipe given below. You can make this ice-cream in your refrigerator. Looks attractive served in little glass dishes.

gelatine in milk. Beat egg-yolk, add milk, and stir in a double saucepan until it thickens. Cool, then mix in gooseberry puree, and lightly stir in stiffly-whipped whites of eggs. Turn into a souffle-case or mould and leave until required.

Consolation Prize of 2/6 to Mrs. R. Campbell, 111 Cascade St. Katoomba, N.S.W.

CHERRIES FRANCAISE

Half cup cherries, 1 cup cherry juice, 5 slices dried (dried), 6 tablespoons butter, 2 tablespoons sugar.

Melt butter, add dried bread, and when it is browned take out immediately. Put cherries and juice into remaining butter, and stew cherries well. Skim cherries out of the juice, and place in a dish to keep warm. Put fried bread into cherry juice and saute it again. Take out and cover with warm cherries. This is an unusual breakfast or luncheon dish.

Consolation Prize of 2/6 to Mrs. A. P. Nielsen, 26 Laureate St., Pirie West, S.A.

AMERICAN THREE-MINUTE CAKE

Two eggs, 1 cup milk, 1-1.5 cups brown sugar, 1-3 cup butter, 1 1/2 cups plain flour, 3 teaspoonsful baking powder, 1 teaspoonful cinnamon, 1 teaspoonful grated nutmeg, 1lb. stoned dates, cut in pieces.

Put all ingredients together in a bowl, and beat for three minutes. Be sure to add all ingredients at once, as adding them separately will cause failure.

Bake in a moderate oven 45 minutes.

Consolation Prize of 2/6 to Mrs. R. D. Shelley, 28 George St., Pennington Hills, N.S.W.

DANISH BUTTER CAKES

Half pound butter, 1lb. sugar, 1lb. flour, 1oz. ground cinnamon, 1 egg, ginger and spice.

Mix ingredients well together. Roll out very thin, cut with a tumbler, and decorate top with sliced peel. Bake in a moderate oven.

Consolation Prize of 2/6 to Miss E. McGibbon, North Isis, via Chidlers, Qld.

ICE-CREAM

Half pint cream, vanilla to taste, 4 tablespoons sugar, 1 tin condensed milk, 2 teaspoons gelatine, a little hot water, 1 cup milk.

Beat cream and essence till stiff. Add sugar, a little at a time. Blend condensed milk with a little hot water, add to mixture stirring rapidly. Then add milk. Place in freezer. Stir frequently to prevent faking.

This makes two trays. Consolation Prize of 2/6 to Mrs. A. Cupitt, 35 Ascot Rd. Rowral, N.S.W.

TWO TART FILLINGS

1. Two mashed bananas, 4 passion-fruit, 1 tablespoon icing sugar. Beat all together well and put into tart and cook as usual.

2. Half cup apricot jam, 1 egg, 1 cup coconut, piece of butter size of walnut.

Mix all together, melt butter a little if very hard. Bake in tart.

Consolation Prize of 2/6 to Mrs. J. Jardine, 5 Herbert St., Edgecliff, N.S.W.

WHISKY APPLES

To every pound of apples add three-quarters of a pound of sugar, rind and juice of one lemon, a little cinnamon, bruised ginger, vanilla and half-gill whisky.

Peel apples and scoop out core; put into a large, clean stewpan with whisky, spices, etc., and simmer very slowly for an hour. Turn apples and skim frequently and do not let them break; they will become quite

transparent. Put them in glazed jars. Boil syrup for 5 minutes and pour over them. When cold, tie down. These will keep good for a long time and are delicious served as dessert.

Consolation Prize of 2/6 to Mrs. H. Kench, 18 Melbourn St., West Hobart.

COCONUT DREAM

Two rounds white bread, 1 pint milk, 1 cup desiccated coconut, 3 or 4oz. sugar (according to taste), vanilla, yolk and white of 1 egg.

Heat nearly one cup of the milk. Cut crusts off the bread, then pour hot milk on and mash. When mashed, add sugar, then coconut. Mix very well. Beat yolk of egg well, add slowly remainder of milk, then stir into coconut mixture. Pour into buttered piddish and bake in a moderate oven for 1 hour. Add vanilla, lemon or almond flavoring to coconut mixture before cooking.

Meringue: Beat the white of egg stiffly, then stir in 1 tablespoon coconut. Beat up again stiffly, then put over baked pudding. Replace in oven for a few more minutes until meringue is light brown. Sufficient for 5 people.

Consolation Prize of 2/6 to Mrs. David R. Orchard, Postal Receiving Office, North Toora, S. Gippsland, Vic.

CARAMEL CREAM PUDDING

Three eggs, 3oz. castor sugar, 1 gill cream, 2oz. loaf sugar, juice of 1 lemon, 1 pint milk, vanilla essence.

Put loaf sugar and lemon juice in saucepan over heat until a rich golden brown. Pour into wetted mould and cover every part of it. Beat eggs, and mix with sugar, milk, cream, and vanilla to taste; strain into mould, cover with greased paper, steam gently 1 hour. Turn out and serve hot, or it may be iced and served cold.

Consolation Prize of 2/6 to Miss Gladys Gossden, 10 Sturt Ave., Monreith, S.A.

Save time and trouble with

MISS PRECIOUS MINUTES

TO make the iron slide easily, rub it over when warm with a piece of candle.

HOUSEWIVES who find their frocks wear under the arms when the rest of the dress is quite good can make pretty pinafores and aprons by cutting out the sleeves.

WHEN a door-lock becomes stiff, dip the key in olive oil, insert in the lock, and work round. This oils the lock and makes it run smoothly.

THE white pulp on oranges and other citrus fruits can be removed easily if boiling water is poured over the fruit and allowed to stand for a few minutes before peeling.

TO soften hard water, fill little muslin bags with fine oatmeal and place one in the water a few minutes before you are ready to use it.

SPRAYS are a handy idea for many beauty preparations. You will save time and also operate more effectively if you use sprays for such things as hair tonic, perfume, body

frictions, liquid cleansing lotions and face tonics.

CARRYING the heavy clothes-basket from line to line on washing day is a wearisome job. You can save yourself much of this trouble and stooping if you put castors on the bottom of the clothes-basket, which will enable you to push it along with the foot.

BEFORE washing wooden hair-brushes, rub some vaseline into the polished wooden back. This will prevent cracking in the warm water.

MOTHER-OF-PEARL buckles, buttons etc., freshen up if covered with a paste of whiting and water. Allow the paste to dry before rubbing off and polishing.

A SMALL tear in a skirt can be invisibly mended by smearing a piece of the same material with white of egg, placing this over the tear on the wrong side and then pressing with a hot iron.

GARDENING tools smeared over with a little grease will not go rusty.

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Don't be put off with any other white cleaner — insist on KIWI.

6^p COUNTRY SLIGHTLY HIGHER

Here are new ways to use . . .

CRISP CEREALS

THOSE wholesome ready-cooked grains, deliciously crunchy to eat, can be used to make delicious fare.



CORNFLAKE biscuits are most appetising and make a most useful addition to your biscuit-tin.

LEFT: The recipe for this delicious caramel ring is given on this page.

BELOW: This crumb pie shell can be used with many different fillings.

PERHAPS it hadn't occurred to you that those delicious ready-cooked cereals that you serve for breakfast can be used for making dishes of various kinds and also the most piquant tea-time dainties.

Cornflakes are very suitable to use for covering fish, brains, croquettes, cutlets, etc., that are to be fried. First dip the article to be fried in seasoned flour, then egg glazing, and toss in the rolled cornflakes.

Cornflakes may also be used for lining the pedestal for vegetable or fruit charlottes. Mix a quantity of cornflakes with melted butter and cover the bottom and sides of the pedestal with this mixture, fill with fruit or vegetables, cover top with more cornflake mixture, cover with buttered paper and cook in moderate oven until crisp. Remove paper covering ten minutes before serving to brown the top.

BRAN AND RAISIN PUDDING
With Caramel Sauce
Six ounces flour, 2oz. all bran, 3oz.



chopped suet, 4oz. brown sugar, 4oz. seeded raisins, 1 teaspoon baking powder, 1 gill milk, 1 egg, 1 teaspoon vanilla.

Grease well a medium-sized pudding basin. Grease a piece of white paper 2 inches larger than the basin. Put the flour, baking powder, bran,

suet, sugar and prepared raisins into a basin and mix thoroughly. Make a well in the centre and stir in the beaten egg and sufficient milk to make a fairly soft mixture. Pour into prepared basin, cover with greased paper and steam for two hours. Serve with vanilla custard or caramel sauce.

Caramel Sauce: Two ounces loaf sugar, 3 tablespoons water, 1 dessertspoon sugar, 1 dessertspoon corn-flour, 1 pint milk, vanilla to taste.

Put loaf sugar and water into saucepan and allow to boil until a deep honey color. Allow to cool slightly, add milk slowly and simmer five minutes. Add blended cornflour. Cook 3 minutes, add vanilla and serve in hot sauce boat.

CEREAL AND VEGETABLE SALAD

Two cups grated carrot, 2 cups shredded lettuce, 3 finely chopped eschallots, 1 cup diced celery, 1 cup chopped apple, 1-3 cup salad dressing, 4 tablespoons cream, 3 tablespoons vinegar, 1 cup all bran, 1 teaspoon salt.

Mix the vegetables and apple together in a large bowl. Add vinegar and salt. Add the whipped cream to the salad dressing, pour onto the prepared vegetables, add the all bran and mix all well together.

Serve on crisp lettuce leaves on individual plates. Garnish with slices of tomato and cucumber if liked.

This makes a delicious salad and is very suitable to serve as a luncheon dish as a substitute for meat.

CRUMB PIE SHELL

One-third cup butter, 1 cup sugar, 1 cup cornflake crumbs (4 cups cornflakes will yield 1 cup fine crumbs).

Melt butter in pie plate. Add sugar and crumbs; mix thoroughly. Press mixture evenly and firmly around sides and bottom of plate. Chill before adding filling.

ICE-CREAM PIE

One crumb pie shell, 1 quart ice-cream, 1 square chocolate.

Fill chilled crumb pie shell with ice-cream. Grate chocolate over top. Serve at once.

By
MARY FORBES
Cookery Expert to The
Australian Women's Weekly

flakes, stirring so that each flake is coated. Pack in small, well-buttered ring moulds or large mould. Cool. Unmould and serve with cream.

CORNFLAKE BISCUITS

Half cup sugar, 1½ cups chopped dates, 2 tablespoons water, 2 tablespoons orange juice, 1 tablespoon grated orange rind.

One cup shortening, 1 cup brown sugar, 3½ cups flour, 2 teaspoons baking powder, 1 teaspoon salt, 1 cup water, 1 teaspoon vanilla, 2 cups cornflakes.

Combine dates, sugar, water, orange juice and grated orange rind; cook until soft paste is formed.

Blend shortening and sugar thoroughly. Sift flour, baking powder and salt together and add alternately with water and flavoring to first mixture. Stir in coarsely rolled cornflakes. Chill. Roll dough to about 1-inch in thickness. Cut with floured pastry cutter; spread one round with filling and put a second round on top, pressing edges together. Bake on greased baking tin in moderately hot oven about 12 minutes.

This mixture will make 36 biscuits.

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glasses

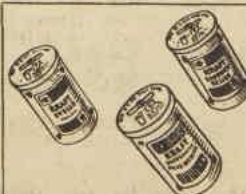


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YOU SERVE
OUT OF THEM

Then
YOU CAN DRINK
OUT OF THEM

♥♦♣♠ Grand for sandwiches, quick snacks, salads . . . KRAFT CHEESE SPREAD, zesty and golden . . . KRAFT SANDWICH RELISH, piquant and quick-spreading . . . KRAFT MAYONNAISE, to pep up the flavour of your salads! Get to know all three of these exciting, convenient Kraft delicacies.

And in no time you'll have a collection of the smart new Swanky-Swig glasses they're packed in. The new Swanky-Swigs are patterned with hearts, diamonds, spades or clubs . . . when empty you'll find dozens of uses for these gay little glasses. Get some at your grocer's to-day.



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Sausages & Vegetables

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JANUARY days call for lots of cool and tempting salads like this. Lettuce chill and crisp. Bright ripe tomatoes brimming over with a filling of pineapple and nuts. Golden cubes of Kraft Cheddar Cheese.

Add Kraft, and you add style, you add zestful flavour, you make any casual salad a real treat and a nourishing meal. Remember Kraft Cheese, like meat, is rich in tissue building proteins. It provides vitamin A, energy units and the milk minerals, calcium and phosphorus, needed to build bones and teeth. It takes a full gallon of milk to make a single pound of Kraft. Include Kraft regularly in your summer salads.

HERE'S HOW!

- | | |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 4 tomatoes | 1 teaspoon chopped parsley |
| 4 slices ripe pineapple | 1 teaspoon chopped mint |
| 8 oz. packet Kraft Cheddar | Lettuce |
| 1 cup shredded pineapple | Mayonnaise |
| 1 cup chopped nuts | Pepper, salt. |

Wash tomatoes, cut off tops and scoop out centre pulp. Sprinkle with salt and pepper. Mix tomato pulp with shredded pineapple, finely chopped nuts, parsley and mint, and pile up in tomato cases. Garnish with an edging of shredded lettuce. Cover large salad plate with lettuce leaves. Arrange pineapple slices around edge and place a filled tomato on each. Cut Kraft Cheddar into cubes and pile in centre of dish. Decorate with chopped nuts and serve with Kraft Mayonnaise.



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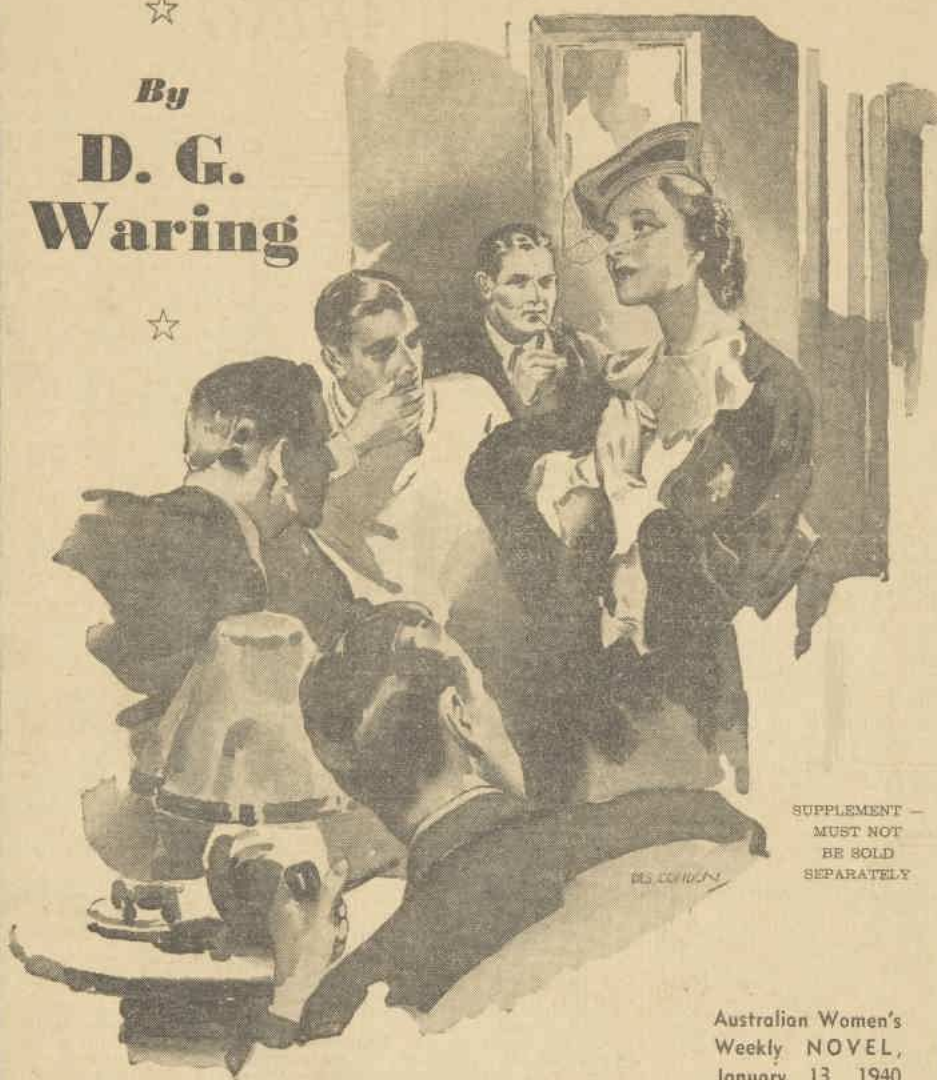
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PART I

The Oldest Road



By
**D. G.
Waring**



SUPPLEMENT —
MUST NOT
BE SOLD
SEPARATELY

Australian Women's
Weekly NOVEL,
January 13, 1940

THE OLDEST ROAD

PART 1

By D. G. WARING



JIM HAUGH silently opened the door of the Intelligence Mess and paused, unobserved, on the threshold.

Four men were already in the room, members of that branch of the Service known, unofficially, as "Craddock's Own," yet no one, seeing them now, would have guessed their calling, so unlike were they to the furtive secret agent of popular imagination.

In an arm-chair by the fire, "Blackie" Lenoir, native of the Seychelles, Frenchman in everything but nationality, was, as usual when off duty, asleep. Opposite him the Hon. Cecil Wycherly, known as "Bertie," spread his graceful length on a sofa, and beneath the best light, "Chucker" Brownrigg, looking more like a house captain of a public school than a "hush" man, nift his fair brows over a manual of shorthand. At the window "Weekly" Reynolds, tall, dark, and fortyish, resembled an artist far more than a man of action.

"Boot!" said Jim loudly.

Lenoir woke instantly, and Reynolds turned from his contemplation of the misty November drizzle.

"Hullo, Harry!" Owing to his name being practically unpronounceable to Saxon tongues Jim Haugh had been so called since his recruit days. "Come to join this gloomy company who are hanging about waiting for some foul job?"

"You won't have to wait long," said Jim; "I've just seen Arkwright cruising round with lists in his hand."

Everyone was instantly alert. Lists meant orders, and orders were a species of lucky dip from which might be extracted perilous adventure or the soul-destroying monotony of "routine observation."

"If I'm down for Moscow again," gave out Wycherly, "I swear I'll bury my grandmother for the umpteenth time and go into retirement till the grass is green above her many graves."

It was the custom in Craddock's Own for each agent to be known to his fellows by a nickname, some extraordinarily apt, and Wycherly's, culled from a popular song, suited him down to the ground.

"You won't," prophesied Jim. "You will trot off like a good little 'hush' man to do what you're told. Personally, I can't expect another job as good as my last."

"Which was?"

"Secretary-chauffeur to a gentleman of Greek origin and purchased British nationality, who owned a flat in Curzon Street and a villa at Cintra. I never knew there were so many subversive societies in Lis-

bon, and that fellow belonged to them all. Talk of trouble-makers, he was the King Pippin! His name down for next Honours List too!"

"Swine!" said Brownrigg. "I suppose he's dining in Downing Street to-night!"

"Scarcely," returned Jim imperturbably. "We had a regrettable accident one dark and stormy night. I, too, was killed outright. The submerged car was all that was ever found of us."

"If you please, Mr. Harry," Mumford, the mess waiter, appeared in the doorway, "one of the young gentlemen from the Incubator is downstairs asking for you."

"Send him up, Mummy. That O.K. by everyone?"

"Sure." It was Wycherly who answered. "I'm down for the next lecture, Harry."

"Half your class will probably go to sleep on you," said Jim. "I've had them out 'tailing.' What is the subject, Bertie?"

"Disguises. To a lot of half-baked infants whose ideas on the subject stop short at false beards and dark glasses."

Lecturing to the Incubator, in other words the school in which recruits were trained for their dangerous calling, was not a popular pastime. Sir Arthur Craddock's theory that the trainees learned more from men who were actually engaged on "hush" than from the most highly qualified ordinary teacher was no doubt an excellent one, but it did not find favor with the agents whose scanty leisure was thus curtailed.

The youth who came diffidently into the ante-room was not one of the senior students, and this, his first visit to the holy of holies frequented by fully fledged agents, was a momentous occasion.

"Hullo, laddie," Jim greeted him cheerily. "First hound home! Where are the others?"

"I think they went to Hampstead, sir." Following another noisy overcoat, eh? And you, one gathers, did not?"

"No, sir. I spotted the hare wasn't you just outside Westminster Station."

"Method?"

"He walked differently."

"Good enough. Produce your card."

He took the card which each instructor initialled at the end of a test, and the boy flushed with pleasure when he saw Jim mark the letter "A" before the hieroglyphic representing his signature.

"Oh, sir, thank you!"

"Don't thank me, my lad. Thank Providence for giving you eyes to see, and a certain amount of grey matter above the ears. You bothered me quite a lot on the run, and if you do as well in 'disguises' this evening you'll have a complete 'A' card for the week."

"Cheers! Couldn't you take us in 'disguises,' sir? This other bloke is sure to be beastly dull."

Jim gave a hoot of laughter. "I've marked you 'A' for trailing, son, but you're somewhere near 'Z' in fact. The bloke to whom you refer is among those present."

"Oh, I say!" cried the youth, and fled the room.

"Nice lad, that," said Wycherly, amused. "I must try not to be too dull. What is his name, Harry?"

"Budde."

"Unfortunately. Knowing the extreme originality of this show, I feel he is doomed to become 'Rosey' the moment he emerges from the Incubator. If you go on being such a howling success with the infants, Harry, you'll find yourself on the teaching staff permanently."

"That's a job I wouldn't mind having later on," returned Jim. "Nice settled billet for one's old age."

"Toujours optimistique," chuckled Lenoir. "Nos autres."

"It's bad form to talk anything but English in 'store,' Blackie," Jim interrupted.

"Ah, this bad form!" exploded Lenoir, his usually impeccable English slipping beyond his control. "I blow it from me—like this—pouf. Ah, si je n'ai—"

"Oh, good lord!" said a weary voice from the door. "The usual uproar. Blackie again—I might have known it. Can't you fellows have any discussion without a row?"

"Hullo, Griggs! Come right in and join the fire-worshippers. Be lenient with us, old man, we're only merry little lads giving vent to boyish spirits!"

Wycherly pushed forward a comfortable chair. He had heard, as had the others, the note of hysteria in the newcomer's voice.

Hugh Gregory, the purple shadows under his deep-set eyes making his thin face look whiter in contrast, dropped wearily into the offered seat and took the drink Jim gave him, without thanks.

"Smoke's gone," he announced baldly. "Fell under a train at Swiss Cottage yesterday evening, not five yards from where I was standing. He died instantly."

"Fell?"

"That will be the official story. There will be a nice vacancy in Subversive Occult for someone."

Reynolds, the most senior man present, noting Gregory's unsteady hand and the constant twitching of a nerve in his temple, decided there would shortly be two vacancies in that much dialled line of investigation. Meeting Wycherly's eyes for a second, he knew that he was thinking the same.

Had Gregory not been present, specula-

tion would have been rife as to who might be chosen to replace "Smoke" in S.O., as investigation into the subversive occult was familiarly called. But one did not discuss a dead man's shoes before his late working-partner and best friend.

With one accord the others began to talk of something else: following Lenoir's lead to a much discussed play at that moment running at a West End theatre. But Gregory refused to let well alone.

"I suppose," he said distinctly, "you fools are under the impression that you are being kind and tactful. Think I'll be grateful for your consideration, eh? Well, I'm not!" His voice leapt to a higher register, sharpened by nerves no longer under his control. "No, I'm not grateful: I think it's infernally insulting, your treating me like a blind fool. I've been in this show longer than any of you, and I'm well aware that the only emotion passing through your so-called minds is fear—stark, deadly fear that one of you may be chosen to take Smoke's place."

"I say, Griggs!" protested Reynolds. "Hold on!"

"Hold on! Hold on! What else have Smoke and I been doing for the past three years but holding on? All very well for you. You've all been on straight jobs: escorting Special Messengers, watching Embassies, grappling with the Red Menace—child's play compared with the Occult."

"Oh, I know you've risked a knife in the back or a bullet fired from the dark, but when all's said and done, you've only anticipated your deaths by a few years, which will be a drop in eternity, but we—we've risked our souls! You've never heard of the 'Kings', have you? Never known what it is to be bound hand and foot by their foul initiation, feeling the very life-fluid drained out of you and—"

"Mr. Gregory!"

Cruelly schooled never to show involuntary emotion, not one of the men present jumped, but all rose to their feet at the unexpected sight of Sir Arthur Craddock in the room. Never before had the Chief been known to invade their sanctum unannounced.

"I ask your pardon, gentlemen," he said quietly, "for disturbing your privacy. Not—the eyes which could be so kind now held a steely anger—"that you have been permitted to enjoy your off-duty hours in peace. . . . Gregory, I want you in the office immediately; also Wycherley and Harry."

Despite the fact that he had for many years held the threads of British Special Intelligence in his capable hands, and could speak and understand many foreign tongues with enviable ease, Sir Arthur had never mastered that trick of intonation which marks the difference between fluency and perfection. No foreigner, hearing him, could have mistaken him for anything but a Briton, and the Celtic snarl in Jim's surname had ever defeated him. Even on official occasions he still addressed his subordinate by his nickname.

"Lenoir," continued Sir Arthur, "you will take the Incubator class this evening in Bertie's stead, and you have my permission to let them off lightly—half an hour will be sufficient—as I understand they have been nearly run off their legs this afternoon."

"Yes, sir."

"Isn't that like our Arthur!" said Wycherley to Jim in the flat, barely audible monotone of their service. "Takes the skin off poor old Griggs, and then hands out an

almost free evening to Blackie and the Incubator like a kind old gent giving kids a bag of sweets."

"I bet he takes Griggs out of S.O.," returned Jim in the same tone. "The man is as jumpy as a cat."

"Verge of a nervous breakdown, if you ask me. Last fellow I'd have thought would crack up. Wonder what has done it?"

"Drugs," said Jim. "Look at his eyes."

It was a long walk through endless passages from "store" to the Chief's office, and any ordinary observer would have thought that the two men following Sir Arthur and the trembling Gregory were walking in silence. Gazing straight ahead of them, their faces expressionless, only an expert could have told, by a certain vibration of the throat muscles and a slight quiver of the lips, that they were carrying on a conversation. In stage ventriloquists these movements are more noticeable, since they have to make themselves heard at some distance, but in a trained "hush" man, his ear attuned to such a method of communication, no such forcing is necessary.

"I've never seen the Chief in such a bait before," continued Jim. "I wouldn't be in Griggs' shoes for anything."

"You probably will be—and for nothing, too. What do you think he wants with us? To tell us a funny story?"

"You don't mean—"

"We're for S.O., Harry."

"But I know nothing about it!"

"Nor do I, for that matter, but I suppose we'll never learn younger."

In the big severe office, Sir Arthur seated himself at his table and signed to his secretary not to leave the room.

"Stay here, Arkwright, I shall want you. Get me the sanatorium on the telephone, will you?"

"Yes, sir."

"Sit down, Gregory," ordered Sir Arthur. "You don't look fit to stand."

"But, sir—"

"Sit down!"

Gregory subsided, casting an imploring look at the other two, who stood woodenly before the door. Despite their great admiration for their Chief, they still felt like gawky schoolboys in his presence.

"Well, gentlemen," he said to them, "I credit you with sufficient intelligence to know why you are here this evening. I want you to replace Gregory and Sweepmore in S.O."

"But, sir!" broke in Gregory, "that is impossible—"

"Nothing is impossible, Gregory, except that one of my officers should allow himself to become inefficient. I intend to work S.O. in a different manner in future, using Wycherley on the outside and Harry in the Lodges. You will kindly retain your self-control sufficiently to pass over to the men I have ordered to take up your investigations—What?—this to Arkwright—"

"—oh, my call? Thank you."

He picked up the hand microphone from his table, and spoke in slow, careful German, understood by all his hearers save Gregory, who, specialising in Eastern languages, had left the European ones to his late partner. Listening to the instructions given to the doctor responsible for the health of Craddock's Own, they realised how near, in the Chief's opinion, their companion had come to speech insanity.

"You have still three years of your present contract to run, Gregory," said the

Chief as he replaced the receiver. "How much of that time you spend under Dr. Forsyth's care depends largely on yourself. I will see you in the sanatorium to-morrow and receive your report, after which you can pass your information on to your reliefs."

A crafty expression crept over Gregory's face. Instinctively, both Jim and Wycherley took a step towards him.

"Suppose I withhold that information?" he suggested.

"Then we shall have to do without it," returned Sir Arthur coldly, and touched a bell at his elbow.

His orderly, a huge ex-Guardsman, answered the summons.

"Ah, Greer! I want you and Potter to escort Mr. Gregory to the sanatorium—and see he gets there."

"Very good, sir."

Gregory sprang to his feet, his face convulsed with hate, a sinister light shining in his eyes. For a moment he stood crouched, as though about to leap across the intervening table and take Sir Arthur's throat between his long, clutching fingers. Jim, Wycherley, and the orderly closed round him, ready for any emergency.

For a second more he stood tense, then his eyes fell before the Chief's steady gaze, and, with a shrug, he turned away, allowing the orderly to lead him from the room.

"Phew!" ejaculated the irrepressible Arkwright, who, by virtue of an artificial leg and his invaluable qualities of secretaryship, dared to take enviable liberties with his Chief. "I thought we were in for a bad blow-up then, sir."

"So, at one time, did I," returned Sir Arthur, "but he got himself in hand at the last moment. I'm afraid poor Gregory has been too thorough. The higher degrees of the Order of the Eastern Kings, of which he was a member, indulge freely in drugs—ether being, I believe, the favorite, since it is claimed that it releases the astral quicker than any other. I have an idea that they will be kept busy in the sanatorium for some time if Gregory is to return to work a normal being."

"Keeping him so long in S.O. was a mistake, and one which I should not have made but for the fact that he was getting such valuable information through them. See that a report of his suicide gets to the Comparative Thought Society's headquarters, Arkwright—you know the name he went under with them. It will appear natural enough, taking the state of his nerves in conjunction with his friend's sudden death. I leave the method of his demise to you."

"Now, Bertie, I am reversing the usual order, and despite the fact that you are senior to Harry, I am giving you the outside lead to his inner work. I want you to reappear in London society. Go everywhere, do everything, be seen at as many functions as possible; in fact, let it be known that the Honorable Cecil Wycherley is once more taking his place among the useless and ornamental ones of the earth."

"When the Chief Commissioner first suggested our taking over investigation of the occult, I was inclined to think it beneath our notice; imagined, in common with the Yard, that occult societies were composed of unpleasant but not particularly harmful cranks. Now I'm not so sure. That's why I want you among the idle rich, Bertie, because I'm beginning to think there's a political pull somewhere in that connection. Report here at ten to-morrow morning, and we'll go through working methods. Now

trot off, you two, and have a happy evening."

"A happy evening!" scoffed Wycherly when they were clear of the office. "The Chief has a strange idea of preparing one for same! Gives us a job of which we know nothing, with no light to guide us except that thrown by a predecessor who is more than half-bats, and expects us to run away and play, bursting with boyish fun! How do you propose to make use of your few hours' liberty, Harry?"

"By taking a selection of Incubator lads to a funny film. I fixed that up provisionally this afternoon. Blackie will have done with them early. And you, Bertie?"

"I," said Wycherly, "will get drunk—gloomily and with malice aforethought—in my own flat, where my so excellent man-hervant will have no difficulty in putting me to bed."

"More power to you," countered Jim, wise to the fact that the other seldom meant what he said, "though I fear it will be an expensive evening. Are you supping in the mess? There's Irish stew and cod steaks on the menu."

"Heaven forbid!" cried Wycherly. "I prefer real food. Better come with me, Harry."

"No, thanks, I'm hungry—and I like Irish stew. Real food, as you call it, is wasted on me, Bertie; I'm a gastronomical atheist."

He opened the mess-room door, letting out a strong odor of Irish stew.

"Holds its own against the cod, doesn't it?" he grinned over his shoulder. "Erin go bragh!"

The door swung to behind him, and for a few seconds Wycherly stood still, marveling at the change nine years in Craddock's Own had wrought in the man whom the Chief had turned down at his first interview.

At eighteen, James Fitzpatrick Haugh had been too flamboyant even for the Incubator. Red-haired, blue-eyed, the brand of an Irish provincial education stamped on his manner and accent, he had been considered unsuitable for a calling where unobtrusiveness is an essential. At twenty-seven, he was an easy-mannered man of the world, pentecostal of tongue, his hair, darkened by systematic greasing to a dull, uninteresting brown, his amazing eyes veiled by naturally drooped eyelids. A dangerous man, whose deceptively innocent appearance had been the undoing of many an enemy of civilisation.

"Gastronomical atheist!" murmured Wycherly. "Not bad, that, for our simple son of the manse. Good lord! What a difference in nine fleeting years!"

ONE of the traits which endeared Sir Arthur Craddock to the men under his command was his occasional acknowledgment of his own infallibility. Unlike Colonel Lawther, his second-in-command, who would never admit to being wrong, the Chief held by the creed that only fools never made mistakes.

He confessed to one of his rare mistakes next morning, when Jim and Wycherly came before him to receive what was known in Craddock's Own as their "riding instructions."

"I took the wrong line with Gregory yesterday," he told them. "Ticking him off before the rest of you was a psychological error which has resulted in his shutting up like an oyster to me. I might have been an enemy interrogator for all the information I could get out of him in the sanatorium this morning. Dr. Forsyth says he's not as abnormal as one would think, but

that he has had some pretty serious shock. I think you'd better go and see him now, Harry, and take his report as a matter of routine, while Bertie and I look through some of this insane literature." He indicated a pile of periodicals littering his table.

"Listen to this," Wycherly picked up a copy of "Increasing Light," the premier monthly of the Comparative Thought Society. "This is a poem—at least, that's what it calls itself in this magazine. May I read it, sir?"

"What is to be, I am,
And when I have reached
That which I shall become,
What am I?"

"The answer, I should imagine, is a lemon! I say, sir, could anything but a negative report come out of tripe like this?"

"That is what I am sending you to find out, Bertie."

"I am light,"
(read Wycherly)

"I am darkness,
I am a speck of dust,
I am a mountain—"

"And I, with the Chief's permission, am away to see Griggs," broke in Jim, adding in a respectful tone, "and I hope, sir, that you and Bertie have a happy morning."

"Cheeky young hound!" growled Sir Arthur, though his smile belied the words. "Talk less, and get on with your job."

The "sanatorium" towards which Jim made his unobtrusive way was in reality a nursing-home reserved exclusively for members of Craddock's Own who were on the sick list. There were times when hospital curiosity as to how a patient had received some strange wound might have been inconvenient, and Dr. Forsyth's staff were all ex-service men and women, capable of keeping their own counsel.

Jim found Gregory out of bed, sitting in an armchair by the window of his room, gazing moodily out on the leafless plane trees of the small back garden. His black silk dressing-gown, embroidered with startling red dragons accentuated his pallor, but Jim was glad to see that the eyes he turned towards his visitor no longer held the half-insane light of the previous evening.

"Do I apologise, Harry," he began without preliminary, "or shall we ignore the regrettable fact that I came unstuck in front of you and Bertie yesterday?"

"Whichever you like," said Jim. "Personally, I'm never surprised when anyone cracks a little after a long specialised job. The marvel to me is that we don't do so more often."

His unruffled calm, and the way in which he appeared to regard the recent outburst as a matter unworthy of comment, had a steadying effect on Gregory.

"Oh, well, if you take it like that . . . But the Chief treated me as though I were a leper, curse him!"

"My dear Griggs," soothed Jim, "if the Chief were perfect, he wouldn't have so many fellows ready to go through torture at his slightest bidding. Why, the simple fact that he missed something last night which I spotted right away, made me fonder of him than I've ever been before, and that's saying a good deal."

Gregory rose from his chair and crossed the room to the fireplace, standing with his arms resting on the mantelpiece, his back turned to Jim. "So you know how Smoke died?"

"Guessed it."

"Harry—it had to be. They'd got him—

body and soul. Last night he was to have been initiated into the Inner Circle—the highest degree of the 'Kings'—and no one knows what they'd have got out of him there. While we were in the same degrees I could keep an eye on him, but he was a better occult subject than me, and they kept putting him up without me. I tried all I knew to get him clear before it was too late, but it was no good. I was bringing him back, Harry—going to hand him over as a 'break-up,' and he knew it. Knew, too, that if he tried to escape I'd have shot him without compunction and taken the consequences."

"It had got to that—it was his life or the safety of more than one of our crowd. So he took the easier way himself. I believed he realised, once he was away from the devil, how deeply involved he had become; knew that he wasn't really responsible, and that he might be giving something away. But that doesn't stop my feeling that I am his virtual murderer. The Chief mustn't put anyone fresh into the 'Kings', Harry, because they suspect we're watching them; only suspect, mind you, but it means that any stranger coming up for initiation will be thoroughly investigated—perhaps too thoroughly, even for us."

"Why didn't you explain this to the Chief when he came to see you?"

"He doesn't trust me. I tell you, Harry, because you're so confoundedly normal, that if you believe me I'll know I'm not insane."

"Which fact," said Jim quietly, "is supremely obvious, Griggs."

"Do you mean that?"

"I do. Only a sane man could have pulled himself together in so short a time. Look here, Griggs, aren't you going to offer me some of that whiskey which this so excellent nursing-home or whatever has thoughtfully provided? Or is it only for ornament?"

For the first time, Gregory smiled.

"How like an Irishman! I might have known it wouldn't be long before you spotted your national drink. Help yourself, Harry—and smoke. I've been off it so long that I've lost the taste. Smoking isn't encouraged in the Occult—upsets the vibrations and steadies your nerves too well."

"Cheerful outlook for me," said Jim, squirting soda into a liberal whisky. "In fact, I'm beginning to think the Chief has given me a bit more than I can chew putting me on S.O."

"You're wrong there," Gregory turned from the mantelpiece and lowered himself carefully into a fireside chair. Jim also sat down, noting as he did so that all the other's movements were slow and deliberate.

"You're quite wrong," said Gregory. "The Chief has chosen the one man in Craddock's Own who is capable of handling S.O. in the right way, namely, without too much subtlety. Look at me!" he concluded unexpectedly.

"Trying a little hypnotism on the side?" asked Jim. But he lifted the heavy fringe of concealing lashes about his eyes and looked Gregory in the face.

"Good lord!" gasped Gregory, looking deep into twin pools, dazzling blue as the sea which foote the Antrim coast on a summer's day. "How did you ever get into 'hush' with those?"

"I nearly didn't, got turned down on them at my first interview. In fact, it took me nearly two years to perfect their subjection, confound them. They're a legacy from the Dad, and though the dear knows I've seen him use his on his congregations often enough, I never realised I was similarly cursed till the Chief pointed it out to me. Then I studied them in a mirror,

and realised they were a bit overpowering." He spoke without any affectation, as though mentioning an unfortunate deformity, and with a familiar droop of his eyelids, Gregory felt as though a cloud had darkened a sunny day.

"You'll do," he said, and began to tell Jim something of the occult societies, half-inspired, half-evil, which were daily gaining hold on a world ever seeking "some new thing." It was a strange recital; one which, to the ordinary listener, might have seemed unbelievable. But Jim had learned never to discredit the fantastic, and Gregory was patently speaking the truth.

"And so," he finished, "you see the danger. They have plenty of money—the dupes in the lower degrees, and the affiliated orders provide that—and money, Harry, means power."

"But what is the object of all this?" asked Jim. "From our point of view, I mean. Granted, these societies are a moral and spiritual menace, but what is the big man, the real trouble-maker, going to get out of them?"

"What I have just said—power. Think of it, Harry. Thousands of poor vegetarians, their wills weakened by dope and hypnotism, frightened out of their lives by half-glimpses of those mysteries which only the Eastern races can view unmoved; all ready to follow a strong man, obeying his lightest order with the fidelity of martyrs going to the stake."

"Good lord!" said Jim. "I hadn't thought of that."

"After your first lodge meeting you will think of it. And, Harry, never let them get you. Beware of the 'Kings' and, above all, of the Great Grey Brotherhood, for in it are the real adepts. And from them—if you can only find it—there is a lead back to the World Revolution Group and the source of a nation-wide unrest . . ."

"I'm supposed to be going on leave to-morrow, Harry, to a farm belonging to the Chief on the Cornish coast, where I shall hibernate, listen to the wireless every evening, and perhaps learn what natural sleep feels like once again, but if you want me, wherever you are and whatever you're doing, I'll be there to give you a hand."

"Thanks, Griggs—frightfully decent of you, but I'm afraid if I make a muck of things it will probably be in circumstances which won't allow of my sending you an S.O.B."

"Not by ordinary means," replied Gregory, "but, as sometimes happens with totally divergent personalities, you and I are on the same mental wavelength. You have only to call me—not loud, just in your mind—and I shall hear you if I am at the other end of the world—or farther. Try tonight, then I'll not have to come rushing back from Cornwall to prove it."

"I'll take your word for it," said Jim, beginning to think he had been wrong about Gregory's sanity. "Dr. Porcynth wouldn't half curse me if I hauled you from your bed on a winter night! I don't discredit your funny business enough to try the experiment, old son. What you have told me about S.O. and a possible lead back to outside trouble has given me something to work on. I wasn't at all certain what I was after up to this."

"You won't be alone. I shall be with you. The real me—the ego—all that can ever reach out and touch another life-force. Remember that, Harry."

"Righto," said Jim, rising and holding out his hand. "I'll look out for your astral

coming charging up from Cornwall if I get myself into a jam."

Gregory took his hand, holding it for a little longer than is customary between Britons. His own palm was hot and dry, and Jim could feel the nerves leaping in his wrist.

"Cornwall," he said, speaking very slowly, as though he were bringing each word from a great distance. "I shall not come from Cornwall, Harry. Good-bye."

What prompted Jim to do so he could never afterwards have said, but he gave Gregory the old adventurers' farewell:

"Happy landfall, Griggs."

"Thank you, Harry," said Gregory. "Allah protect thee, my brother."

Somewhat troubled, Jim left the sanatorium, and returned to headquarters to give in his report to Sir Arthur. Later, he repaired to "store," as the agents' quarters were called, to find that, by coincidence, a number of "jobs" having terminated simultaneously, the place was unusually full.

Of the group of the previous afternoon, Wycheley was the only absentee, and in addition to several colorless members, generally employed on routine duty, there were present two outstanding personalities, Luigi Ricci, the Gibraltian, and "Blaster" Smith. The last was a brilliantly clever Cockney, who spoke seven languages—English not excluded—with incorrect fluency, and whose humor and sympathies were as wide as his native Bow Road.

As always, the news that Jim was on a fresh job caused general interest.

"What is it this time, Harry?"

"S.O."

"Now road for you, isn't it? Working alone?"

"No, curse it! With some woman called Vic!"

A shout of laughter greeted his words. Jim's dislike of "mixed" jobs was well known to his fellows.

"Oh, very funny—for you!" continued Jim. "And to crown all, this confounded female has a title, Lady Aroon Solway, born McCullagh, if you please. Her people are big pots in the County Tyrone, and when the Chief introduced us she looked at me as if I was something shot at and missed."

"Cripes!" said Smith, who himself had been responsible for the girl's nickname, bestowed after her first visit to "store," when she had remained patently "not amused" by his and Ricci's efforts to entertain her. "You 'ave gorn up in the world, and no mistake! I don't envy you your partner."

"Is she pretty, this Vic?" asked Lenoir.

"You'll be able to judge for yourself, Blackie. I heard the Chief tell her she was to lunch in the mess to-day."

At this, there was a general straightening of neckties, coats were twitched into a better set, while Lenoir and Ricci, truly continental, produced pocket-combs, and made, with one accord, for the nearest mirror.

"Lot of blinking Cissies!" sneered Smith. "Think they 'adn't never seen a woman agent before! Ain't you going to pose yourself up, 'Arry?"

"I am not. When I became a spy, Blaster, I put away childish things, and interest in the female of the species was one of the first I cast overboard."

"Don't blame you—'deous lot of cows, most of ours, and them that ain't don't look 'ardly respectable. Take Kitty—she's a good little worker, I give 'er that—but flashy, I blush every time I 'ave to work with 'er! Now, this 'ere Vic—"

"Shut up!" warned Jim. "Here she is!"

Aroon Solway seldom was seen in "store." Her first introduction to her colleagues in Craddock's Own was still too fresh in her memory. Following the usual procedure with a new member, the senior agent "in" had led her to the centre of the room, where, after requesting her to remove her hat, he had left her for some considerable time, in order that those present might memorise the points on which a trained "hush" man depends for identification; points which persist even when the appearance is altered by clever disguise.

Even now, as she entered the ante-room, she felt the cool stare of more than one pair of eyes, for several of the members present had not seen her before. Until now, Aroon had expected to arouse interest in male eyes, but to her fellow members she was merely a woman agent, a necessary evil, with whom they might one day be condemned to work in partnership. Jim was not alone in his distaste for "mixed" jobs.

Watching her, Jim knew just what she was feeling. Familiar with the position her people held in their native Ulster, he realised there must be sterling worth in this girl, or she could not have survived the gruelling tests through which even women had to pass before becoming regular members of Craddock's Own.

At lunch, Reynolds, the senior member present, took one end of the long table, Lenoir the other, Jim seating himself beside Aroon, though he was fully aware she would have preferred any other neighbor.

It was during this meal that Aroon, maintaining the enforced silence of ignorance, received her first sight of the vast store of knowledge acquired by "hush" men in the course of their duties. All around her sentences prefaced by, "They were saying in Bukarest," "I was speaking to a man in Sarajevo," "The proprietor of the 'Kaiser Krone' at Zwolle told me only last week," gave her some idea of the varied experiences encountered by these men. It seemed strange that they should be so ordinary to look upon, and, in their moments of relaxation, want to show more interest in the antics of the store kitten than matters of international importance.

"It is always unwise," murmured Jim in her ear, "to judge a book—or even a whole shelf of books—by the cover, Vic. An unwise but, mercifully, very common practice. Blaster! When you've quite done with those cigarettes, you might shove the box in Vic's direction."

Lighting her cigarette, Aroon decided she did not care for the man who was to be her working partner. He would, she thought, need keeping in his place.

Wondering how soon she could, with civility, take her departure, she joined the after-lunch party round the fire, now reduced to Reynolds, Lenoir, and Jim—Lenoir, whose discerning eye had detected her undoubted beauty despite the severe and rather trying clothes she affected when off duty, bringing her a liqueur and cup of excellent coffee.

"Well," said Jim, "I suppose I shall have to drink up and hurry away. I've got to take the incubator in their first afternoon lecture."

"Too bad!" called a gay voice behind them, "Kitty!"

"The same, my darlings—and as glad to see you as you, I hope, are at the sight of me."

Had Aroon heard Blaster describe the newcomer as 'flashy,' she would have undoubtedly agreed. Kitty certainly hit the eye, from the crown of her absurd little

hat to the still-like heels of her size three shoes. Tiny, with hair of a brassy gold, often incorrectly attributed to peroxide, few would have suspected her of being the cleverest female agent the Service had ever known.

"What about a drink, Lovely?" suggested Reynolds.

"No need to ask me twice, Weekly, darling." She perched on the arm of Reynolds' chair, steadying herself with an arm round his neck. "Who is the stranger within our gates, please?"

"New member," explained Reynolds. "Vic—Kitty."

With the experience of long training, Kitty sensed the other girl's disapproval.

"Pleased to meet you, Vic." She raised her glass. "Here's to you, my dear. Now, who is taking me out to-night? One at a time, one at a time! I don't need a battalion! Weekly spoke first, but I'll try and fit you all in in rotation. Now tell me the news."

"Yours first," said Jim. "Is it permitted to ask from whence you have come, ma petite?"

"Certainment! Geneva. Oh, what a job! Eleven weeks acting chambermaid at the Itali; bored stiff, but compensated by enormous tips, and the dickens of a good 'positive' report to hand in at the end. Vic, that's a clever get-up of yours. Talk of negative reports, that's an illustration! No one would ever guess you are really a howling beauty. Going on a mixed job?"

Aroon nodded. Kitty's spontaneous tribute made her feel more kindly towards the flamboyant scap on the chair-arm.

"Better take care, or you'll be turning your partner's head, and getting him the sack. Who is he?"

"I am," said Jim.

Kitty gave a squeal of laughter.

"You'll be safe with him, Vic. Poor old Harry! He does hate working mixed!"

"I don't think," said Aroon coldly, "that I am going to care about it myself."

"Oh, well, take things as they come. What's the racket, Harry?"

"S.O."

"Oh," said Kitty soberly. "Is it? What, going already, Vic? Well, good hunting, dearie. You've drawn lucky in your partner, even if he is new to that particular game..."

"Our Arthur must be losing grip," she remarked when Aroon had gone, "what the deuce is he thinking about, putting her on S.O.?"

"She will, you think, be no good, eh?" asked Lanor.

"It's not that, Blackie, but S.O. is no place for amateurs—nor, come to that, for half the old hands in the show. I only touched it once, its lines crossed mine, and I had to take it in my stride, and—well, I'm not easily scared, but I was then."

Proned on the hearthrug—his favorite position when in "store"—Jim raised himself on his elbows and looked up into her face.

"Trying to put the wind up me, Kitty?"

"Darling, I never attempt the impossible. But when you get people who look past you to things they see and you don't, and tell you quite seriously that they leave their material bodies every night to go skittering round the place seeking 'liberation,' which, as far as I could see, meant something I should call by a far nastier name—then, yours very sincerely, Kitty, is definitely not playing. Harry, darling, you have my sympathy."

"I'll need it, cherie, specially as I won't

even get my last off-duty evening with you all."

"Why?"

"I have an engagement which is practically a command."

"The Chief?"

"No, the Black Prince."

"Lawther!"

"Even so. Wants me to go round and have a drink with him at his home. No wonder you all look dashed! I was a bit shaken myself, and Mumford, who brought the invitation, says he's never known our Dark and Sinister One do such a thing before. I bet there's more in this than meets the eye."

"Must be," said Smith. "I must know we all 'ates 'im like poison."

"I don't," returned Jim. "I admit he's not an endearing personality, but he's so infernally efficient. Look at our Kitty, debating with herself as to whether I will or will not play the fool with our honored sub-Chief! What do you think I'll do, woman dear? Trot into the Presence on all fours and playfully worry the turn-ups of his trousers? There are some people with whom one does not just, dear heart, and Lawther is undoubtedly one of them."

"And another," added Smith, "is your blessed Vic, Harry."

"Don't call her mine," said Jim wearily; "she was wished on me by the Chief. Cheerio, everybody—if I don't push off now the incubator grubs will be getting out of hand. I wish I'd been paired with you instead of her majesty, Kitty; I'll never be able to live up to her baronial-hall outlook."

As the door closed behind him, Kitty shivered.

"No, I'm not cold," she said, in answer to Lanor. "Only apprehensive. I told the truth when I said S.O. scares me, and I don't a bit like the idea of a cheery bloke like Harry getting mixed up in it. Now, who's coming to the pictures—?"

THOUGH he had made light of it to his fellow-members, Jim was not too easy in his mind about Colonel Lawther's invitation. In describing him as efficient but unendearing, he had voiced the general opinion of Sir Arthur's second-in-command. Colonel Lawther had never been known to temper justice with mercy, nor unbend in the slightest degree to those with whom he came in official contact. Jim was the first ordinary agent to receive an invitation to visit him unofficially.

He reached the small, almost countertop, house in Edwards Square just as a limousine drew away from the front, and in the lit interior he caught a glimpse of the well-dressed, dazlingly fair woman whom he knew was Lawther's wife. For which he thanked his lucky stars. He had had enough of women for one day.

Lawther received him in an upstairs drawing-room, heavy with the scent of expensive perfume, exhaled, no doubt, by the exotic lady Jim had seen taking her departure.

"You'll have to excuse my wife's absence, Harry," he began, "but, as I expect you know, she carries on a business as Madame Lulu, and her shop is giving the dress show at the United Charities Ball to-night. She asked me to make her apologies. Shall we go downstairs to my room? The atmosphere will be breathable there."

He led the way out of the room, smiling when he saw Jim turn back to put out the lights.

"Careful lad! I'm afraid Irene's welcome addition to my official salary has made me

careless about the cost of electricity. I often leave the lights on in this room."

"Whereby two routine men remain on duty at the front of the house," Jim reminded him. "Instead of one going round to join the third fellow at the back. I've been 'on' this house too often not to know the routine backwards."

"I sometimes wish," said Lawther, as they went downstairs together, "that I'd come up through the show like the rest of you. Sir Arthur and I started too near the top."

The downstairs sitting-room was comfortable and slightly shabby, with its big leather chairs, and red curtain drawn across the french windows, which led, Jim knew, to a small iron balcony with steps down to the garden. Often, watching the rosy glow on these curtains from outside, he had speculated on what the room looked like behind them, and was surprised to find how near he had been to the truth.

"And this," explained Lawther, removing a Pekingese puppy from the chair he wished to occupy himself, "is Wing-Wong, the gentleman whom Irene has left in our joint custody. Now, Harry, help yourself to a drink, and ask me any questions you like."

Jim looked up, frankly surprised. Colonel Lawther was certainly not running true to form.

"I don't think I want to ask any, sir."

"Are you quite sure? Think again."

"Well—I hardly like to, sir—"

"Carry on. We are being unofficial, remember."

For a moment Jim hesitated, then: "Well, sir, I would like to know why I was put on S.O. It's such miles off my line."

"You've given the reason yourself. S.O. was undoubtedly Sweepmore's line, and, in a lesser degree, Gregory's also, at least, so one would have thought. They were the right type, apparently—and you know where it landed them. The Subversive Occult is different from anything else we handle, and in my opinion should be treated in an entirely new way. Harry, if you had to supply an attendant for a nerve case, what kind of person would you choose?"

"Someone intensely normal, but with enough imagination not to be brutal."

"Exactly. Neither of the two men we detailed for S.O. was entirely normal. You are. Personally, I think you are the right man for the job, though, if I followed my own inclinations, I'd have seen myself to eternity before I put you on."

At his ease now, Jim allowed his surprise to become visible.

"Why ever not, sir?"

"Because I happen to like you," was the curt reply. "Now to business. Have you ever seen Juan Delegana?"

"No, sir."

Lawther rose from his chair, and taking a photograph from his desk handed it to Jim.

"That's the man."

For some moments Jim studied the strong, rather haggard face, arresting by reason of the eyes, which, even in the photograph, seemed to hint at hypnotic power.

"Curious-looking fellow," he remarked, "not English, is he?"

"He calls himself Spanish," said Lawther viciously—"or, rather, a Rock Scorp, but I think he's a half-caste; no one could be so deep in all this occult business if he hadn't some dark blood in him."

Jim bent further over the photograph in his hand.

"Delegana is a trouble-maker, isn't he, sir?"

"Definitely. And the devil of it is that no one can pin it on to him. We're not the only ones, either. Our counterparts in Germany, France, Italy, and even the smaller countries, suspect him. Look at this."

From his drawer Lawther took a roll of parchment and spread it on a bare table in the centre of the room, passing a handful of drawing-pins to Jim.

"Fasten it down your side, Harry."

Jim bent over the big chart, whereon every outbreak of revolutionary trouble in recent years was outlined and dated on a vast map of Europe.

"See here—and here—and here," Lawther's forefinger rested for an instant within the various circles. "These all tell their story. Murder, riot, unexplained sabotage of factories—chances with police—assassination of a king—mysterious outbreaks of fire; all events calculated to upset established order and breed fear by the creation of chaos. And in every one of these cases, Harry, Juan Delegana had recently passed that way."

Jim whistled. "What a little gentleman! Where is he now, sir?"

"That," replied Lawther, "is what we have got to find out. Our last report was from Johannesburg, but that is six months old now. Since then we have lost all trace of him, and so have von Ritter, van der Vene, and Rochelle the Belgian—the only Continental 'hush' chiefs who ever dream of pooling international information before it is dead cold."

"Johannesburg," said Jim slowly, "Johannesburg—Johannes— Wait a minute, sir! There was a 'Moon' Lodge opened in Jo'burg about six months ago, and—let's have another squint at the chart, because I fancy, yes, I thought so! There are 'Moon' Lodges in nearly every one of these marked places. I wonder if—"

"You've got there!" triumphed Lawther, ripping the drawing-pins from the table and returning the chart to his desk. "I've been following that line myself for some time, but I wanted you to strike it on your own. That's why you are on S.O., Harry—because you are essentially a hunter. It will be your job to find the lead back to Delegana, and when you get it cling on with both hands and all your feet, secure in the knowledge that you will get any help you want from headquarters, if we have to mobilise Cradock's Own by battalions."

And then, seated in that comfortable room, with the Peke snuffling on his knee and a cloud of tobacco-smoke enveloping him like incense clouds around a temple idol, Lawther began to talk about the occult.

From the storehouse of a mind, the flexibility of which was so often hidden beneath a mask of hectoring officialdom, he began to bring forth gems of knowledge and understanding which bound his hearer in admiring silence.

Quietly, yet with the conviction of real knowledge, he instanced case after case of men and women who, having started on the Road to Endor, with possibly the purest motives, either became obsessed by the darker side of their new faith or, as so often happened, only woke to realisation when they had gone too far to withdraw. Drugged, devil-tamers, haunted by the terror of the Unknown which, almost within the memory of man, caused the burning of alleged witches, for such unfortunates that

road led only to self-destruction or the unthinking hell of an asylum for the insane.

"I never believe in sending a man out in ignorance of what lies before him," finished Lawther, "that is, if I am sufficiently well up in the subject of his future investigations to be able to hand out what I believe you young fellows call 'the dope.' Talking of dope, you'll probably come across a good deal of that in passing, but it won't be your pique. Feeling nervous?"

"No, sir—only a bit inadequate. There seems to be such a lot I don't know about this business, and I'm so infernally ignorant of the occult."

"All the better. Occultism is like dope; the more you take, the more you find yourself needing. That is where the other two failed; they knew too much, and that confused their vision. Now, Harry, I'm going to ask you a very intimate question. Do you, or do you not, believe in—"

He broke off as the telephone on his desk rang insistently.

Trained to shut his ears to official conversations which did not concern him, Jim did not listen to the replies to the unintelligible squeaks from the other end of the wire, so was quite unprepared for Lawther's announcement at the end of the conversation that he would have to go out immediately.

"I'll not be long, Harry—half an hour at the outside. Wait here till I come back, will you? I haven't finished all I want to tell you."

"Very good, sir."

Instinctively Jim glanced at the clock on the mantelpiece. Five minutes before midnight. Evidently Lawther intended him to make a night of it!

Seating himself comfortably by the fire, he took up Delegana's photograph and concentrated on memorising the points of identification.

How long it was before he realised he was not alone he could not afterwards have said, but when he looked up he was not in the least surprised to see Gregory standing before him. Subconsciously his mind registered the fact that the other must have made a triumphantly silent entry, for Jim had heard no sound, had not even sensed the room door opening behind him. Yet there was Gregory, one elbow resting on the mantelpiece in a characteristic attitude, looking down at him with his deep-set, tragic eyes.

"Hullo, Griggs!" said Jim, "I never heard you come in. By Jove, old son, you're looking a lot better than you did this morning! No wonder they let you out of the sanatorium! Are you staying the night here?"

For answer, Gregory pointed to the photograph which Jim held in his hand.

"He is here," he said, and his voice sounded strange and remote—"in London now. Go slow, and you'll get him in the end, Harry."

"I'll do my best," replied Jim, "but I'll have to rely on you, Griggs, for—"

His voice trailed off into silence, and he sat still for a second, staring at the spot where Gregory had been standing. Then, springing from his chair, he made a hasty tour of the empty room, proving beyond all doubt that, probably as a precautionary measure, it was impossible to open the door without making an audible sound.

Then he returned to his seat by the fire, deeply thoughtful. Had the room been in semi-darkness, lit only by the flickering flames, he would have dismissed the vision

of Gregory as a mere hallucination. But a "hush" man's dislike of dark corners, combined with Lawther's personal predilection for the garish, caused him to favor brilliant illumination. To Jim's mind, the whole house was unrestfully overlit.

It was nearly one o'clock when Lawther returned, and, going to the decanter, helped himself to a strong drink before he spoke.

"I'm glad you waited, Harry. I've just come from the sanatorium with bad news. Poor Gregory—"

"Is dead," finished Jim.

"How the devil do you know that?"

"He was here, sir. I just looked up and saw him standing on the hearthrug, hanging himself by one elbow from the mantelpiece, like he always did in 'store'. It must have been about half an hour ago, sir."

"Shortly after he passed out. He lapsed into unconsciousness after your visit to him this morning, and they sent for me when they knew he was dying in case he should have anything he wished to say; but he never came round at all—just stopped breathing and slipped away without even a struggle. Look here, Harry, do you really mean what you have just told me?"

"I do, sir. I know it sounds odd; but there he was, looking so ordinary that I began talking to him: asked him if he was staying here for the night, as a matter of fact."

"Did you get any answer?"

"Not to my question. He looked at Delegana's photograph, and told me the man was in London now, and that, if I went slow, I'd get him in the end. I began to say something in return, and—well, he just wasn't there any more, sir."

Lawther's pallor took on a greyish pallor, and, despite the warmth of the room, he shivered. That Jim, being a Celt, might possibly be "fey," was understandable, but his matter-of-fact acceptance of the phenomenon was beyond his senior's comprehension. Glancing at the decanter, he noted that, save for the drink he himself had just taken, the level stood as it had done when he left the house. Jim had not been drinking in his absence.

"Good lord!" he muttered, and felt the palms of his hands becoming moist, "what an extraordinary thing! I wonder if Delegana is in London?"

"He most undoubtedly is," was the quiet reply. "By the way, you were going to ask me a question before you went out. Something rather intimate, you said. Do you want to ask it again, sir?"

Into Lawther's eyes came an expression of envy, as he looked at this man, so many years his junior, who, he now knew, could face the perils of his hazardous calling undiminished.

"No need for that question now, Harry. You have given me your answer."

"I AM afraid, Aaron," said Jim, some three weeks later, "that the time has come for you to marry me. Oh no"—seeing her expression—"I don't mean literally—only in the eyes of Senat Camarra and our brethren of the Rising Moon. Already I am spending more time than you appreciate in pseudo-dalliance beneath this roof, but I can't give my 'shadow' the impression that ten minutes of your society is long enough for an ardent lover. I think the hour has now struck when the beautiful Miss Muller should become Mrs. James Francis Hogan."

"Is it really necessary?" inquired Aaron.

"Definitely. Sleeping in 'store' is becoming increasingly difficult. There's reason

In most things, but having to spend at least two hours each night in shaking off an extremely efficient trailer before I can seek my well-earned bed is getting boring. Once married, I can move in here, and you won't have to see so much of me when we're not working. We'll do it on the quiet, and you can break the news to our fellow-members when you take me to the Silver Lotus next time."

"Oh, very well," said Aroon, and glanced meaningfully at the clock.

Jim crossed to the window and peered through the slats of the old-fashioned venetian blind.

"Better let our friend out there freeze a little longer," he announced. "Annoying for you to have to put up with me like this, but you can't expect to have your pathway always well smoothed for you, my dear."

"Have I ever?"

"If you ask me," countered Jim cheerfully. "I should say you have never had anything else—where 'hush' is concerned. Wait till we really get going, and you'll soon find a difference."

He turned once more from the window, and picked up a novel from the table.

"Is this book readable?"

"I believe so—for the intelligent."

"In which category I am evidently not included!" laughed Jim. "I'll try it anyway. No good kicking against the pricks, Aroon. On this job you and I are supposed to be engaged, and engaged persons, my child, are in the habit of spending considerable time in each other's company—apparently enjoying said company. Always be thorough."

He seated himself at the other end of the sofa and became absorbed in his book.

Aroon followed his example, but though she held a novel before her eyes she could hardly be said to be reading it. Jim annoyed her more than she could say, though she was well aware that he was right in paying these long visits to her lodgings. Right, also, when he insisted that they should be 'Aroon' and 'Jim' to each other even in private, lest the faintest hesitation over the names should occur when they were on duty.

So far, their work together had not been productive. Firmly adhering to his strangely imparted instructions to "go slow," Jim had so far let Aroon take the lead; and while she daily became a more valued member of the "Moon," he remained outside, accompanying her only to public meetings, or those social events at which non-members were welcomed.

From the outset he had created a very simple personality for James Francis Hogan, Aroon's supposed fiance—shy, adoring, totally ignorant of anything appertaining to the occult. In so doing, he knew he was falling far short of his partner's ideal, since she patently expected him to show a stimulated enthusiasm equal to her own.

She had been nervous in introducing this very ordinary young man to her Comparative Thought friends, fearing that he might be too hearty for the women who were predominant in the Society. She need not have been afraid. This vital male being, with his shyly diffident manners, was a welcome change from the weedy creatures whom they were accustomed to meet in their lodges. Each cherished a secret hope that she would be the one to bring him into the C.T. fold.

Though Aroon would have been the last to admit it, she was just a little jealous of his instant popularity, feeling he did not

deserve it. For eighteen months she had worked hard in the C.T., steeping herself in its precepts, sending in careful reports to headquarters—reports which Dan Arkwright read and then placed, unknown to their compiler, in the "negative" file.

New to the real working of Craddock's Own, she did not realise the amount of preparative ground-work done by an agent before he took the first step towards obtaining the information he sought. Almost unconsciously she had allowed some of her dissatisfaction with her working-partner to creep into her reports, and only that morning Arkwright had submitted her latest to the Chief.

"I have an idea, sir," he said, "that Vic doesn't think an awful lot of Harry."

"All the better," was the amused reply; "the less she thinks of him the more she'll concentrate on her work. It would never do if she guessed we were using her as a stalking-horse!"

Seated in the small over-furnished sitting-room allotted to her by the landlady of those "safe" lodgings in Beauchamp Road, Aroon was feeling guilty about that report, the opening sentence of which began:

Working, as I am, alone to all practical purposes, since my partner has but the most elementary knowledge of the subversive occult . . .

Viewed dispassionately, there was something rather catty in that backhanded hit at another member, and Aroon prided herself on what she hoped was a masculine fairness of mind. Still, it was better they should know at headquarters that Jim was not pulling his weight. He was probably excellent in other branches of investigation; if she kept on nagging, they would most likely take him off S.O.

At the other end of the sofa Jim was still deep in his book, and his working-partner studied him with growing irritation.

In the light of the unshaded electric bulb above his head, his hair, now freed from dulling lotions, shone like dark burnished copper, and the healthy tan acquired when driving his last "trail" beneath the sun of a Portuguese summer had not yet faded from his cheeks. Tiny points of light tipped the long, lowered lashes, and Aroon caught herself speculating as to the real color of the eyes she had really never seen.

Presently he looked up, and though she could not have said that he avoided looking her in the face, the question she had been asking herself remained unanswered.

"A merciful man is merciful even unto his spotter," he said. "I don't think I'll keep that poor fellow any longer in the cold, specially as I intend giving him a run for his money going home. I'll fix up about this wedding business—which should, I think, take place fairly soon."

"A joke," snapped Aroon, "can be carried too far, Jim."

"Granted, if it is a joke. 'Hush' very seldom is. On a stunt like this one must be prepared for all emergencies, Aroon; to which end I have let myself be seen driving there and back again in cars with trade plates every day lately. I even picked up Karama Clara yesterday."

"Who?"

"The female you let loose on me the first day you took me to the 'Silver Lotus.' She and Wispie Winnie—her meek little girl-friend—were straying down Lancaster Gate, and simply hopped at the suggestion that they should come for a ride. I took them to Richmond and visited a fictitious customer—mother of one of the Incubator lads; she played up beautifully—and then for an

airing in the park. They loved it, and I was the dickens of a success."

"Wispie Winnie is sure our marriage is going to be 'so different.'" He gave a spurt of laughter. "She's right! Well, if we have roused the interest of those two it must be the same with the lad who has been tailing you home every night since you joined—"

"What?"

"Oh, didn't you spot him?" asked Jim innocently, "how funny! Lawther got me to counter-tail him one night last spring, but he was so obvious that I passed him over to a lad fresh from the Incubator on the second night. So you see it will be just as well for us to be observed emerging all coylike from a certain registrar's—one who always accommodates us on these occasions. . . Now I'd better get going. Come down and see me off at the street door Aroon—looks more natural-like."

Silhouetted against the light from the hall, he turned in the open door-way and drew the girl into his arms.

"Good night, my darling," he said in tones clearly audible on the far side of the street.

His cool cheek brushed hers, holding the contact for a second, and no one but Aroon herself could have told it was merely a stage embrace.

Jim set off towards King's Road, Chelsea, turning to wave to Aroon, thereby giving himself the opportunity of seeing a figure emerge from a garage entry and stroll after him.

At the corner of the street he paused to light a cigarette, and the other man stooped to attend to a shoe-lace. The moment his "shadow" bent down, Jim flung away the match, and set off rapidly in the direction of Elm Park Gardens, his trailer, who was short and fat, following him at a lumbering run.

"Poor devil!" was Jim's mental comment, "built for comfort, not speed. The regular gent must be having a night off; this one is new to me."

He stopped walking so abruptly that the canteering figure was within a few yards of him before it could pull up.

"Anything wrong?" inquired Jim pleasantly, "you seem in the devil of a hurry, sir."

"Stranger—here," panted the little man; "want-to know—way to—Underground Station."

"South Ken, would be your nearest," replied Jim. "Why not walk along with me? I'm going that way myself."

Thankfully the little man fell in beside Jim, delighted to have his trailing made unexpectedly easy. But, if he failed on the trail, it soon became evident that he was an astute interrogator. A passing car gave him the opportunity, instantly taken, of finding out if Jim really belonged to the trade in which Aroon had placed him.

"Nice bus that!" he remarked, "a friend of mine is thinking of buying one. I wonder if they're any good."

"Got up chiefly for show," returned Jim. "Ever handled one yourself?"

"Can't say I have."

"Then don't. They turn over too fast in my opinion, and I doubt if they'll stand up to their revs."

"You seem to know something about cars."

"Have to. They're my job. I'm a salesman."

"Good job, I should think."

"Not so bad. The salary isn't anything, but the commission is good. In the trade yourself?"

"Not now. Had a garage of my own once."

From that the conversation became technical, and Jim knew he was making a good impression. When, during an argument as to the current second-hand price of a certain marque, he produced a "bread book"—that bible of the salesman, wherein is written the price of every known make of car according to its date of construction—he saw by the gleam in his companion's eye that he had gained the information he had wanted.

At the station Jim took a ticket for Piccadilly and knew, by the involuntary sigh which escaped his companion, that he had hoped his quarry would not be going far. Which, argued a headquarters somewhere close to South Kensington.

Discussing heavy oil engines with the fervor of an expert, Jim had time to be sorry for the man, who was too small and fat to make an efficient sleuth. On the platform he caught sight of Blaster Smith, returning from a short job of his own, and catching Jim's eye for a second, he thoughtfully fingered his chin. Jim's answering sign was an unostentatious as was his careless touching of the second button of his coat, but Blaster entered the train with them, seating himself farther down the carriage, apparently absorbed in his evening paper.

It was no discredit to the little man that Jim shook him off so easily at Piccadilly Circus.

Even an expert tracker might have been forgiven the loss of his man in the rush of people caused by the closing of theatres and cinemas. It all happened so naturally, too. One moment he was listening to Jim's denunciation of built-up areas, the next he was alone, separated from his newly-found acquaintance by a large man who cannoned into him, asking angrily: "Why can't you look where you're going?"

By the time he had disentangled himself his quarry had disappeared in the pushing, hurrying crowd.

Having shaken off his follower, Jim made rapidly for headquarters, and was soon in one of the dormitories where the agents slept when off duty, or while working in London at a daytime job.

These dormitories, long, bare apartments, were an outward and visible sign of the precautions taken to ensure efficiency among "hush" men. At the end of each dormitory a grille in the wall gave on to a small apartment where a watcher sat all night, alert for any indication of a man's talking in his sleep.

On a long job, it was often necessary for an agent to live, and, in some cases, to share a bedroom, with his "trail," and a chance remark uttered in sleep might well endanger not only his own life, but that of others as well. Even in their hours of relaxation, the men of Craddock's Own lived under strict surveillance.

Jim had been in bed for nearly an hour when Smith entered the dormitory, walking shoeless, out of consideration for several sleeping members.

"Artful, ain't you?" he began, seating himself on Jim's bed, "wishing your blood-bond on to me!"

"Sorry, Blaster, but you offered to take him on."

"Course I did. Only my fun, 'Arry—and you 'aven't 'ad a decent night in bed for I don't know 'ow long. Was that your usual 'tail to-night?"

"No. He was a dud compared to the

regular one. I wonder who sends them out?"

"Cove with a pale, long face; 'air receding from 'is forehead—he bald in a short time. I shouldn't wonder; grey eyes, wears rimless glasses, 'as three false teeth top row front and the others discolored. Know 'im?"

"Can't say I do. When did he show up?"

"Just after the little feller 'ad lost you. Give 'im all sorta, too; and I 'eard the other chap say 'e thought you was just wet you said you was, because 'e couldn't catch you out in any slip; and the other bloke says 'e was going to 'ave a try at you 'imself to-morrow night."

"Oh, is he? Well, forewarned is forearmed, you know. Did you see 'em home, Blaster?"

"I did, indeed. They took a taxi, and Patsy was dropped at one of them flats in Park Walk, while Specs went on to a big 'ouse in Elm Park Gardens."

"Highly convenient when I go to live there. Who owns that house in Elm Park Gardens, Blaster?"

"A Mrs. Renton-Bland, but she let it recently—her tenant's servants moved in last week."

"Any idea who it is?"

"Fellow on the R.S. list—Juan Delegana." Jim sat up in bed as though he had been stung.

"All hail, Blaster, bringer of good tidings! Now I lay me down to sleep feeling that my period of negative reporting is drawing to a close! You're the world's best sleuth, bar none, old man. When I'm dictator of Mongolia, I'll make you Supreme Chief of my Intelligence. Bless you. Happy dreams."

He curled himself into a ball to sleep, and behind his grille the ever-alert watcher smiled as he lit another cigarette. For the convenience of agents who came in late from duty, a diffused light burned all night in the dormitory, and in the faintly blue twilight the watcher had seen many evidences of nocturnal nerves, but never a move from the bed which contained Harry. In the security of "store" Jim slept with the motionless peace of a healthy young animal.

WHEN he put in his verbal report next morning, the Chief eyed Jim closely across the table.

"Neat bit of co-operation between you and Blaster," he said approvingly, "and extraordinarily productive. I wonder when our troublesome friend J.D. will take up residence."

"He's already there, sir—or, at least, in London."

"Are you sure about that, Harry? No one has reported his arrival in this country, either by sea or air."

"All the same, he's here, sir."

"Have you seen him?"

"No, sir."

"Then on what do you base your assertion?"

"Griggs told me, sir."

"Before his death?"

"No, sir, after."

"That is rather an extraordinary statement, Harry. Suppose you enlarge a little."

Quietly and undramatically Jim described Gregory's momentary appearance in Colonel Lawther's morning-room, conscious that what he was saying must sound fantastic to the steady-eyed man seated at the table.

"Of course, sir," he finished, "I can't expect you to believe me."

"The unexpected often happens, Harry. I do believe you, so much so that I shall

put Weekly on observation at Elm Park Gardens immediately."

Jim needed no further proof that Sir Arthur credited his story. Only for something very special would a man of Reynolds' seniority and experience be put on a watching job.

"This," went on Sir Arthur, "is, I think, where one quotes 'there are more things in heaven and earth—', Harry. You and Griggs weren't particularly friendly, were you?"

"No, sir. I hardly knew him; but when I went to see him in the sanatorium he said something about 'being on the same wavelength as me,' and he told me he'd always be available if I wanted help with S.O. At the time I didn't take much notice, thinking he was a bit queer, you know, but now—"

"You're not so sure," finished Sir Arthur. "Nor am I!" Then, with a characteristically rapid change of subject: "How are you and Vic getting on together?"

"Oh, all right, sir. I don't think she's too pleased about this marriage stunt, but it has to be. The 'outsides' are too efficient to risk a lead back to 'store' any longer. It's all right by day, but they seem mighty keen to know where I sleep."

"I see. Well, fix things up for this Friday, and come to us for the week-end. I'd like you to meet my wife and daughter."

"Thank you very much, sir."

Through the glass partition which divided his office from that of the Chief, Lawther glowered behind his spectacles. From his seat he could see, but not hear, all that passed in the other room, and had noted how Sir Arthur gave Jim one of those rare friendly smiles which were so highly valued by members of Craddock's Own.

All very well, he reflected bitterly, for Arthur Craddock to exert his undoubted charm on the delighted Harry—he was not as uncomfortably familiar with the Subversive Occult as was his second-in-command.

Lawther himself had been on S.O. investigation shortly after the War, and he knew that Jim must be a receptive up to a certain point, otherwise he could not have seen and heard Gregory on the previous night. Of all the younger generation of "hush" men under his command, Lawther liked Jim the best. He was so cheery, so clean, so essentially white.

Would the slimy tentacles of the occult fasten on him too, dragging him down till he became a furtive and unbalanced wreck like poor Gregory?

Turning to leave the Chief's office, Jim saw Lawther looking at him through the glass and smiled a cheery greeting, only to receive a scowl in return.

THE lecture to which Aaron took Jim that evening was very much like others he had attended with her before. True, the house in Lancaster Gate was bigger and better than that of other lodges, since the members of the Silver Lotus were better off than the average run of C.T. devotees.

In the lodge-room, dim-lit and dominated by a huge symbolic painting of the Rising Moon, was gathered the same crowd of repressed freaks, listening to a high-voiced person giving a lecture. The subject that evening was "The Inner Significance of the Path to Liberation," and though the lecturer spoke for over an hour, he gave his hearers no clear idea of his meaning, and Jim greatly doubted if he knew it himself.

The one bright spot, to Jim, was the song with which Aaron opened the proceedings.

True, the words were banal in the extreme, but she had a lovely voice.

From his place half-way down the room he studied her as she now sat by the piano, her big dark-grey eyes fixed dreamily on the lecturer's face. "A good pose," he thought, and, wisely, she had dressed to it.

Her dark hair, which in her ordinary life she allowed to follow its own devices in careless, fluffy profusion about her face, was now parted in the centre, and swept back in severe bands like shining ebony to a bunch of stiff curls at the nape of her neck. From her ears hung great gold rings in the form of serpents holding their own tails in beautifully wrought fangs, symbols of eternal life. Their ruby eyes glistened wickedly when she moved her head, the same design being repeated in the immense brooch gleaming in the bosom of her dress. Her engagement ring—presumably Jim's gift, but in reality drawn from "Wardrobe"—consisted of a solitary opal flanked by two white sapphires, uncouthly and conventional, but, as he had pointed out, quite in keeping with the character of James Francis Hogan.

Looking at her now, he realised she was good at her job, for her make-up was a triumph. A touch of color here, a slight shading there, subtly altered the whole shape of her face, and the imperceptible darkening beneath her eyes gave her the somewhat haggard expression suitable to one for whom the study of Comparative Thought was the greatest thing in life.

"There is the woman I mean," said a voice behind him. "The dark one with the big earrings. If only J.D. could be persuaded to fall for her she'd be easy enough to handle. Though I'm afraid that is an empty dream—our Juan doesn't lose his heart to women."

"Take care," hissed another voice warningly. "You'll be overheard."

"What matter if I am? Not one of this bunch understands Portuguese."

It was unfortunate for the two men that they should be sitting directly behind someone who did. That summer at Olinda had perfected Jim's knowledge of a language which is not universally studied.

"Well, you never know," cautioned the pessimist. "Supposing you are mistaken?"

For answer, his companion raised his voice and gave vent to a remark so obscene that Jim felt himself growing hot, but, though several people nearby said, "Hush!" they did so out of respect to the lecturer. The words themselves meant nothing to them.

"There!" triumphed the first speaker. "What did I tell you? Who did you expect would understand? The buccolic lad in front?"

An unusually fat woman who had already overflowed on to Jim's chair, moved restlessly, and since his was the end seat nearest the wall he shifted a little to give her more room, turning sideways so that he could see the two men behind him without appearing to look round.

One was small and dark, his carefully waved hair rising in a crest above a low, greasy forehead, but his companion's face was pale, and the space between his rimless glasses and the outcrop of rapidly thinning hair shone with the waxy gloss of incipient baldness.

As Jim looked, the smaller man said something which amused the other, and as he smiled a trio of gleaming dentures shone white in contrast to their discolored

neighbors. It was the man whom Blaster Smith had tailed to Elm Park Gardens.

Gone was the boredom which had been settling on Jim like a cloud. Here was real work at last, a welcome relief after almost a month spent in marking time, a chance at last to justify his existence!

At the close of the lecture Jim crushed down his inclination to pick acquaintance with "Specs," who had already smiled encouragingly in his direction. The words "go slow" shone before his mental vision with the warning insistence of a traffic spotlight.

Purposely he thrust his way through the chattering crowd to Aaron's side, where he waited humbly till, having finished receiving congratulations on her singing, she should deign to notice him.

"Oh, Mr. Hogan! I am so glad you could get here to-night. I do hope you enjoyed the lecture."

Jim turned to greet the "Master" of Aaron's private lodge—a tall, refined woman, whom he could never reconcile with her enthusiasm for the teachings of Comparative Thought.

She laid her hand for an instant in his and he could feel the nerves jumping in her thin wrists, just as Gregory's had done that morning in the sanatorium.

"Aaron has been telling me," she continued, "that you are to be married quite soon. I do hope that doesn't mean you will be taking her away from us—I don't know how I could get on without my invaluable secretary."

"I wouldn't think of doing such a thing, Mrs. Bretherton," said Jim. "Aaron's whole heart is in her C.T. and Moon work, and I would be the last to stop her."

"An ideal marriage," broke in the female whom Jim had christened "Karma Clara." "Two entities travelling the Life Path hand in hand, yet each aware of itself, gloriously free to work out its separate karma. How wonderful Miss Millar looks to-night, Mr. Hogan! I always think she is the direct descendant of some dark and lovely priestess, handmaid of the Masters who served in the Temple of the Ultimate Mysteries, don't you?"

"Er—er—yes," stammered Jim, and gave his star performance—a slow, painful blush which he could control at will, infinitely in keeping with his supposed character. He had felt, rather than seen, that the eyes behind those rimless glasses were fixed on his face.

"Oh, Mr. Payton," gushed Mrs. Bretherton, "here you are! I saw you come in, and was so sorry you missed half the lecture. Aaron dear, I want you to meet Mr. Payton, he is secretary to our dear president. Mr. Sinclair hinted that you might be coming here this evening. Mr. Payton—Miss Millar, and her fiancé, Mr. Hogan. Oh, Mr. Sinclair," she turned apologetically to the president of the Silver Lotus, who had just joined the little group. "I didn't see you! I should have left the introductions to you. I must ask your pardon."

"It is granted, dear lady," Owen Sinclair waved a large white hand as though in blessing, but, from the glare he directed at the deprecating woman, Jim gathered his thought-harmony must be cracking. "Come, dear people, come and refresh the material body with earthly viands thoughtfully provided by our excellent Ladies' Committee."

There was the usual rush for the refreshment-table, where minute sandwiches composed of chocolate, banana, or a vegetarian paste were snatched and eagerly devoured

by those whose higher thought could not overcome the hunger-pangs of their under-nourished bodies.

Of the men present, Jim alone went forward to assist in handing round cups of weak tea and a khaki-colored liquid mis-called coffee, noting with pleasure that Aaron was talking earnestly to a somewhat bored-looking Payton. He knew she could be trusted to keep the secretary tethered till he himself was free to take him over. His dark companion had evidently gone home, for of him Jim could see no sign.

"Sent off, no doubt," thought Jim. "Friend Payton appears to be as interested in me as I am in him, though I hope I'm being less obvious."

Whether Payton thought this man Hogan too stupid to need cautious handling, or whether he was merely careless, Jim could not tell, but all the time he was talking to Aaron his eyes followed her supposed fiancé. When finally Jim was once more buttonholed by Karma Clara, the secretary left Aaron's side and came over to him.

"Ah, Hogan," he began, breaking in on Karma Clara's conversation with a rudeness characteristic of male C.T. members. "Miss Millar tells me you are in the motor business. My boss, of course, has all the cars he needs, but I want one for myself, something small—a saloon or coupe, second-hand, in good condition and going cheap."

Jim laughed. "I can get you plenty to fulfil the first three conditions, but those qualities don't always combine with going cheap, you know?"

"Well, perhaps not too cheap." Then, lowering his voice: "Come out somewhere with me, Hogan—can't talk business in here."

"Sorry. I'd like to, but I have to see my girl home first."

"Suppose I come with you? Then we can leave her home, and get off on our own before closing-time. Not really one of this lot, are you?"

He glanced contemptuously round the room, and in that split second Jim had to make a quick decision. For a moment he hesitated, once more employing that ever-useful blush.

"Well—er—I—you see, Miss Millar—"

"Is it in heart and soul, eh? My dear fellow, I quite understand! Doing it for her sweet sake, what? Pay your subscription, attend a few meetings, keep her happy, and no harm done—a little beyond deception! Don't I do the same myself? My boss, the great Juan Delegana, is the big noise in this show, and it would never do if I let on I was a seoffer! Wonderful fellow—writes, you know; is in with all sorts of queer societies—and expects his private secretary to be in them, too. You're quite safe with me, old man; I'll not tell your girl on you."

He leered at Jim, who responded with a very obvious wink.

Payton was evidently a stickler, even if his methods were rather crude when judged by the present standards of Craddock's Own. Still, he was Juan Delegana's secretary, and if he relied on getting in with Jim by his "old mans" and "dear fellows," so much the better for the agent whose "trail" was Delegana himself.

"Let's see if we can get Aaron to come away," he suggested. "Once she gets talking here—"

Payton took his arm and together they crossed the room, followed by many an envious glance. Payton might not be the

rose, but he was very near it, being a high initiate of the "Kings" and the President's right-hand man.

"Come along, Miss Millar," he said, with a note of authority in his voice which no real C.T. member would have dared to ignore. "We will all three go home together. I have a taxi waiting."

Jim fetched the cloak which Aroon wore over her long "arty" dress, but it was Payton who placed the bizarre thing about her shoulders.

Talking volubly, he conducted Aroon down the wide staircase, Jim following behind filled with admiration for his working-partner. She was doing this so well, he thought, giving the impression of real enthusiasm, yet avoiding undue exaggeration.

For Payton, too, he had the admiration of one hunter for another. This man was thorough and it would be a case of diamond cut diamond if fate had decreed that they should cross swords. Owing to the good fortune which had thrown Blaster across his path the previous night, Jim knew that he himself was Payton's objective, and the sleuth in him gave tribute to the way in which the secretary was apparently devoting himself to Aroon and ignoring the man he was hunting.

After leaving Aroon at the lodgings in Beauchamp Road, Payton instructed the driver to take them to the conveniently close Goat and Boots, where he treated Jim to two double whiskies in quick succession.

"I don't know about you," he said, when together they emerged into the Fulham Road, "but I could do with something to eat. The scraps provided by our hosts in Lancaster Gate did not compensate me for missing my dinner. No function ought to be allowed to begin at an hour like seven. I suppose you were there from the beginning?"

"I was. Went straight there from work—and, since you mention it, I am devilish hungry. Though," he added, "I wouldn't have dared to say so to Aroon."

"Poor lad!" laughed Payton. "Rather a test of true love, what? Never mind, you can wean her from all this sort of thing once you're married."

"Oh, I wouldn't do that," said Jim quickly, "even if I could. There must be something in it, or a girl of her mentality wouldn't be so keen."

"Going to join up yourself?"

"Oh, yes. It would make a barrier between us if I didn't. I'm sure it's all frightfully interesting when one knows more about it."

"It is," said Payton, "for the right sort. The people you've met so far are only the hangers-on, the cannon-fodder, as one might say. Here! Stop that taxi, and we'll go to a place in Soho where they give one good food."

"As I was saying," he continued, when they were seated in the taxi, "the lot you meet at lectures don't amount to much. I'll introduce you to my boss, and then you'll see the difference between that crowd and the real thing. By Jove, Hogan, meeting you like this has been a godsend to me! My boss is out of town for the night, and I was feeling like nothing on earth—dominated by what our friends at the Silver Lotus would call a depression-aura. Felt I just couldn't stand my own undiluted company for the rest of the evening. Now we can sit on at Martelli's till after midnight, and I'll see you home afterwards."

Jim did some quick thinking, mentally cursing "Finance" for their action in turning down Sir Arthur's request for a perpetual outside establishment where agents could room at a moment's notice. There was a

certain satisfaction in knowing that their cheneapening methods would cost them something that night.

"Unfortunately I'm not going back to my digs to-night," he said. "I have to go to Coventry by a late train to fetch a car. Got to be up there ready to leave at crack of dawn with a special order. Come and see me off instead."

"Right. I will. Nice to feel that someone else besides myself works at odd hours. Ah, here we are at Martelli's."

He led the way into a restaurant, no better and no worse than its many counterparts which seem to flourish in the Bohemian atmosphere.

"I say," breathed Jim when, after a voluble conversation, the proprietor withdrew with Payton's order, "you are hot stuff at Italian! I heard you rattling away in it at the Silver Lotus."

"That wasn't Italian, that was Portuguese. You evidently don't understand either."

"No such luck. French is my only decent language—that and a little German. Reynolds, the firm which employs me, like their salesmen to know French and German if possible—makes 'em more snappy with foreigners. And, talking of cars, reminds me. I wonder if I could use the telephone here? I want to ring up the fellow who is bringing me a pair of trade plates to Euston, and tell him to fetch along our second-hand list for you to see."

"Of course. I'll come and make it all right with the Signora."

Fate, thought Jim, was playing neatly into his hands. "Trade Plates" happened to be the current code for a night out of town, and a request for the used-car list would give the information "my trail is with me." Payton, he knew, would make some excuse to overhear his conversation over the wire. At Reynolds' they would make arrangements with the "head home" in Coventry, so that there would really be a car for him to drive back to London next morning.

When the two men returned to their table a certain contrains had passed from Payton's manner, and Jim felt a glow of inward satisfaction. This astute man's suspicions were fading fast.

It was an agent called Brownrigg who, looking a typical night mechanic in his stained tweed coat worn over a boiler suit, brought the trade plates and used-car list to Euston. Payton watched the two men meet without special interest, turning away to survey the bookstall while they exchanged a few words.

"Wanted a squint at your trail, Harry. Who is he?"

"J.D.'s secretary and jackal. He's clung to me like a brother all evening."

"What colossal luck! Want me to tail him home?"

"No, thanks. I know his lair, and the less we are after him the better. He's an expert himself. Report for me, will you?"

"Right. Good hunting!"

He strode away towards the Underground, and Jim, trade plates under his arm, rejoined Payton.

"Coming on to the platform with me?" he asked.

"I might as well. I want to spin the evening out as long as I can."

"And see that I really do go on the train," thought Jim, but aloud he said: "Mighty decent of you, Payton. I'm not used to being seen off in style like this."

Payton's glasses flashed as he turned them upon the younger man. "I owe you a debt of gratitude," he said gracefully. "You have

turned my desert evening into a flowering oasis."

He stood by the carriage door till the guard's whistle blew, and as the train drew out of the station Jim saw him turn and walk rapidly towards the barrier.

"Off to telephone Coventry to have me checked up," thought Jim. Which was exactly what did happen, and Jim had no difficulty in spotting the man who was watching for his arrival. Nor did his spotter wait till he was clear of the station before diving into a telephone-box. Payton was evidently sitting up for the call.

THE following Friday morning Jim and Aroon were "married," leaving London afterwards by car for an unknown destination. This resolved into his dropping Aroon at Reading to stay with an invalid aunt, while he proceeded to the Chief's country house near Newbury.

There, screened from prying eyes by the high, red-brick wall which surrounded the house and garden, he spent a thoroughly happy week-end. Sir Arthur made a charming host, and both his wife and daughter exerted themselves to entertain this young man, reputed to be one of the star agents of Craddock's Own, and whom they quickly learned to appreciate for his own sake.

Consequently, when he called for Aroon on Monday morning, he was still glowing with the contentment of that short, happy visit.

"Yes, I had a marvellous time," he said, in answer to her question. "The Craddocks are topping in their own home, and Lady C. is an awfully good sort."

"Are they keen on each other—the elder Craddock, I mean?"

"Oh, definitely. In fact, Gerry—that's the daughter—and I used to eliminate ourselves and leave them together in order that they might have what she calls 'their week-end flirtation.'"

"Queer how some marriages do last," mused Aroon. "Mine didn't. It was foul."

"Tough luck," said Jim, "but not so tough for Craddock's Own."

"How?"

"Well, your loss was our gain. We got a good member by it."

"Do you mean that?"

"I do. You're magnificent in S.O., Aroon—convincingly earnest without overdoing it. There are times when my normal self longs to smack you!"

For the first time in their association, Aroon laughed with him.

"I sympathise! Often I feel myself blushing inside for very shame that any woman should be such a soppy idiot. If the other poor things weren't so muzzy, they'd know a healthy young man like James Hogan couldn't be so gone on Aroon Millar."

"Mrs. Hogan," corrected Jim. "And I think you're wrong there, lady; he's just the sort who would be gone on her. Unlike to unlike, you know, and you're very glamorous in your war-paint. Remember, it was you who first caught Payton's eye. Now, I admit he has some scheme up his sleeve as regards me—what it is I have yet to discover, but something pretty foul, I should imagine."

"Tell me," said Aroon, "how do you manage to call up that very ingenious blush?"

"I really can't explain the method, because I don't know myself. I used to do it, naturally as a youngster, and then, after the Chief had turned me down and I was training myself for another stab at 'hush,'

I found I could do it artificially. Say something embarrassing, and I'll give you a demonstration."

Aroon thought for a moment, and then let a caressing note creep into her voice.

"Do you know, Jim dear, that I'm beginning to like you?"

Color flamed into his face, flooding his cheeks to the roots of his burnished hair.

"Jim, how wonderful! How do you do it?"

"Probably a gift from the gods," was the cool reply. "A present for a good little spy. Art improving on nature, as it were."

On their arrival at No. 11, their landlady conducted them to the rooms she had prepared for their reception.

"I've moved you up a story, my dears," she told them, "so as to have all your rooms on the same floor. You'll be next the second bathroom, won't be used by nobody except gentlemen as is 'ere for a night or so, and my room is the only other on the floor. Sitting-room at the front, and my bedroom and your dressing-room, sir, at the back. Quite a self-contained flat, as you might say. There!" She flung open the bedroom door as she spoke. "I've done me best to make it look nice and 'omey and—"

She broke off and gave a screech of laughter, as she saw Aroon's gaze fixed on the double bed. "No need to be put about, dearie. I know you ain't married, except in the way of business. Mr. Ogan will find that there divan fit for a king to sleep on, and I'll see 'a bed is made up each night after Gladys 'as gone 'ome, and 'ave all cleared away before she comes upstairs in the morning. You 'aven't got any call to worry, miss—ma'am, I should say now—I didn't come on this job yesterday, nor yet the day before that. Mr. Ogan can testify I don't make no more blunders than is 'umanly possible, do I, Mr. Ogan?"

"You certainly do not, Mrs. Hazel," returned Jim warmly. "She's a perfect marvel, Aroon. Wait till we give her a lead as to what name we're using, and never makes a slip afterwards. You've known me by a good few, haven't you, Ma?"

"Serving, to be correct, dearie. Well, I must be going down to see to the dinners. Shall you be wanting your evening snacks early or late to-night?"

"Early, please, we start work somewhere around six-thirty."

"Then I'll boil you each an egg for your tea. Safe eggs; come up from the sister's in Surrey only this morning. I know you don't never fancy a London egg, Mr. Ogan, being a country person by birth. Oh, there was a feller asking for you, Saturday evening. Medium height, pale face, wears glasses. I told 'im you was away on a short honeymoon and would be 'ome to-day. 'E started asking questions, so I give 'im the 'istory we 'ad worked out, and when 'e wanted more," she chuckled reminiscently, "I larned 'im! Kept 'im standing shivering on the doorstep while I give 'im little stories about you till 'e wasn't 'art glad to get away! That's a chap wot will want watching, Mr. Ogan. Well, I'm really off this time."

She smiled herself out of the room, closing the door noiselessly behind her.

"Marvellous woman, Mrs. Hazel!" observed Jim, proceeding to unpack his suit-case and lay out his brushes in marital proximity to Aroon's on the dressing-table. "I've heard her talk a good interrogator so far off his line that he never got back to it. Shows you what training can do."

"Training?"

"You evidently haven't been treated to her life history. She joined the Women's Auxiliary Police after her husband was killed in the war, and worked herself up to being special detective in a munition factory. After the Armistice she was on vigilance work, and then the Chief got hold of her and put her into this job—where she's been the saving of more than one of us, I can tell you."

"I wonder he doesn't use her as an agent."

"Too big. A woman standing five-foot-eleven in her stockings is a bit conspicuous, you know. Incidentally, she's Blaster's sister, and her husband was a detective-sergeant before he joined the Army. So she's been brought up to the business, so to speak."

THAT evening Jim was initiated into the Order of the Rising Moon. A member of the Royal Arch Purple in the Orange Order, and holder of any early degree in the Black, he experienced none of the shrinking fear which others felt at the ceremony, though he had to watch his step lest he should betray familiarity with any form of lodge ritual.

Acting up to the character he had created for James Francis Hogan, he went through his initiation with a fearless simplicity which did not escape the notice of Payton, who, as a member of a higher Order, conducted the ceremony. Once he had been invested, and had taken his seat on a low stool among the other members in pentagon formation on the floor of the lodge, he was able to take stock of the proceedings without, however, appearing to do so.

The ritual was curious, a mixture, as far as he could make out, of distorted Masonry and what might be termed mild magic. That the "brethren" were of both sexes offended his sense of fitness, and it seemed strange to hear Mrs. Bretherton addressed as "Honorable Master" and Aroon described as "Brother Millar." This was necessary, Mrs. Bretherton explained, in order that she should not be confused with their new member, Brother Hogan.

It was when Aroon, in her capacity of Lodge Secretary, rose to count votes on a motion proposed by "Brother Mystery," who, apparently, corresponded to the chaplain of an ordinary lodge, that Jim noticed she wore the jewel of an apprentice "King" on her regalia. It was then that he felt the first cold breath of danger.

Up till now he had been inclined to regard the various Orders within the C.T. as childish imitations of the real thing. Now, he was not so sure. Aroon had evidently taken her initiation oath of secrecy seriously enough to feel it incumbent upon her to conceal her "King" membership from her working-partner. Once again Gregory's warning rang in his ears, "Keep clear of the higher degrees—the Kings and, above all, the Great Grey Brotherhood."

During his initiation Jim had been clothed in the night-blue, hooded domino, ornamented with the crescent moon of the First Degree, a robe similar to those donned by all members before entering the lodge. But Payton's robe was grey, heavy, lustreless, lightened by one spot of color—a blood-red sickle moon of some shining substance, worn directly above his heart.

Presently, instructed by the Immediate Past Master, a gigantic negro, well known on the London stage as a variety entertainer, Jim rose from his place and listened, in a purposely ill-held ritual position, to the

Honorable Master's address of welcome. After this, he was conducted by the stewards, carrying razor-sharp ritual swords, from brother to brother, receiving from each hooded figure the Kiss of Initiation.

This, he found, was the only part of the ceremony which was in the least laughable, for each brother rose from his stool like a pantomime demon shooting through a stage trap, pecked at Jim's forehead, and sat down again as though pulled by a string. He wondered amusedly if any of them ever missed the stool in that abrupt descent.

Yet he could not help admiring the way in which the ceremony was performed. Whatever might be said to the detriment of the Order of the Rising Moon, its members were certainly ritual-perfect in the working of their degrees.

It was in the robing-room that Jim became conscious of a stir among the members, a whispering excitement which held an undernote of apprehension.

He saw Payton cast his grey robe at Aroon's feet, and noted with amusement how she picked it up, smoothing the costly thing with reverent hands before hanging it in a cupboard sacred to higher initiates. As the only member present with a "King" degree, she alone was qualified to touch a Grey Brother's robe.

With seeming innocence he turned to a member by his side.

"What is all this fuss about?"

"Hush! The president has arrived unexpectedly, and no one there to receive him! Such a thing has never happened before—no special preparation either, only ordinary refreshment. Poor Brother Bretherton! She will be distracted!"

Running a smoothing hand over his hair, raised to a copper crest by the rubbing of his hood, Jim hung his robe on the peg bearing his newly-acquired number and prepared to leave the robing-room, only to find the small landing packed tight with now unrobed members.

"Bit of a crush here," he remarked to Karma Clara. "Why don't some of them move on?"

"No one may enter the reception-rooms without permission, Brother Hogan. The president is with us."

"But evidently not of us," thought Jim, and fell to wondering how such a splendid isolation tallied with the vaunted brotherhood of Comparative Thought. Once again, he felt the sense of lurking danger. Not for nothing were these people so rigorously disciplined.

Gradually, order began to evolve out of chaos, and he saw Aroon, list of names in hand, marshalling the members into a queue, using that quiet authority handed down to her by generations of governing ancestors.

Presently the double doors of the reception-room were thrown open and the procession moved slowly forward into the room, each member making a low ritual obeisance before the man who stood on the dais usually occupied by a lecturer, Mrs. Bretherton behind him at a slight, respectful distance.

"The animals went in four by four," repeated Jim to himself, as a fat member caused a momentary hold-up. "The big hippopotamus stuck in the door—"

Alone at the end of the line, he heard Mrs. Bretherton saying his name, and, forcing himself to a disquietful action, bowed low as he had seen the others doing.

"Brother Hogan is the husband of

Brother Millar, our secretary. He only became one of us this evening."

"Ah, a new initiate! Welcome, Brother Hogan! Payton was speaking to me about you only this afternoon."

It was almost uncanny to find himself face to face with the original of the picture he had studied so intently that evening in Colonel Lawther's house, for the man himself was more like the representation than is usual with portraits.

Seeing Juan Delegana for the first time, he found it hard to trace any sign of the dark blood with which Lawther had credited him, for he was not nearly so swarthy as was the Colonel himself. Of medium height, thin almost to emaciation, with dark brows, hair swept back from a forehead the breadth of which was narrowed by two deep furrows between the brows, he resembled some finer type of Southern European more than a half-caste, and the heavily-lashed eyes, deep-set and ringed with purple, were of so light a brown as to be almost amber. There was something feline about this man, and his voice, soft and low, reminded Jim of a purring tom-cat whose velvet paws sheathe claws ever ready to deal a slashing blow.

"So you are Hogan?" he said, somehow making the mere words sound significant. "I have been wishing to meet you ever since Payton mentioned you to me. Come back to my house with me for a few minutes—"

"My wife—"

"She may come, too. My secretary can entertain her."

For the next twenty minutes this strange man moved about the room like a king among his people, graciously bestowing smiles, handshakes, or even a couple of words on a favored few. When Aaron was presented, a light woke in his fine eyes, but died almost instantly, though he looked at her longer than at any other woman. Watching him, Jim received the impression that he was summing her up in relation to her pseudo-husband, and realised that it was he, not Aaron, in whom Delegana was most interested.

It was then Aaron gave the first sign of that team work which was thereafter to be such an asset to their partnership, for when Delegana extended his invitation to her, she caught Jim's eye for a second, and hesitated artistically.

"Unless, of course, Mrs. Bretherton needs you, Mrs. Hogan. I know how busy a good lodge secretary can be after an initiation meeting. Perhaps you would like to postpone your visit to my poor abode to a later date?"

"If it would be the same to you, Honored President—"

"For me," returned Delegana, "it will merely be a pleasure delayed. Perhaps you will spare me your husband? I will not keep him long."

Subtly, yet without any of the effusiveness common to the majority of women members, Aaron managed to convey that, in taking Jim with him, Delegana was conferring a vicarious honor upon herself, and was instantly rewarded with a glance of presidential approval.

"A sensible young woman, your wife, Hogan," he observed, as he motioned Jim to precede him into the depths of a luxurious saloon which was waiting in the quiet street. "Beautiful women are so often demanding where their own particular man is concerned."

"Oh, the Hogans are an ideal couple," put in Payton, who was making a third in the roomy back seat. "They don't in-

terfere with each other's activities in the least—do you, Hogan?"

"I try not," replied Jim, with the transparent honesty he knew was pleasing to Delegana. "You see, my wife is so much cleverer than I am."

"I wonder," said Delegana slowly. Leaning forward, he took a tooled leather case from the door-pocket and offered it to Jim, who raised surprised eyebrows as he helped himself to a cigarette.

"No need to hold back, Hogan! I smoke myself. Quite against C.T. rules, I know, but without the aid of nicotine I am nowhere."

Bending towards the petrol lighter Delegana held to his cigarette, Jim felt the force of that compelling personality directed at him, battering with almost physical force against the hastily erected defences of his mind. The atmosphere of the saloon had become charged with unacknowledged conflict when, clear and not to be denied, Gregory's voice whispered in his ear.

"Look him in the face, Harry—full power."

Unhesitatingly obedient, Jim raised his eyelids, and the light of the tiny flame shone full in their amazing blue depths. In the semi-darkness he heard Delegana catch his breath sharply. Then to Payton, speaking in Spanish, "You are right, he is just the man we need. He has unsuspected possibilities, but you never told me he was psychic."

"I never knew—"

"Fool! Those eyes mean one thing only—and you notice he lifted them for me alone. Some power outside himself warns him to keep them hidden; though, did you ask him he would probably doubt your sanity. What a man to have come upon by chance!" He broke off, and turned to Jim.

"Forgive me, Hogan, for my discourtesy in employing a tongue you do not understand. I have lived so much on the Continent that I forget everyone has not my gift of languages. Tell me—do you look at everyone like that?"

"Like what, sir?" asked Jim, turning his glance, now veiled once more, from Delegana to Payton, as though seeking the answer to a puzzling question.

"Don't mind me, Hogan," broke in Delegana. "I am a curious sort of fellow, as Payton can tell you, not to be judged by ordinary standards. Come, we have arrived at my temporary home. As we say in Spain, Hogan, 'Everything in my poor house is yours, Senor.'"

He took Jim's arm, tucking it affectionately against his side, and led the secretly amused "hush" man towards the hall door.

"I think," he said, very low, "that the Masters have taken pity upon my loneliness, Hogan, for I feel that in you I have at last found a friend."

Meanwhile, as Delegana had prophesied, Aaron was very busy. The position of honorary secretary, be it to a club, society, or association, is seldom a sinecure, and the duties of "Brother Secretary" to an occult lodge is no exception.

By the rules of the "Moon," minutes taken at a meeting must be written up on the same evening, and the minute-book locked in the lodge safe. Regalia had to be checked, folded, and put away in special boxes, and the stools used by members removed from their ritual positions and stacked against the wall. Though assisted by two young and adoring girl members, in the simpler

portion of her duties, Aaron was kept hard at it for some considerable time, and it was late before she finally put out the lights and left Bolivia Gardens for the night.

Descending from the bus at the Redcliffe Arms, she walked along Fulham Road to No. 11, and found, much to her own annoyance, that she was worrying about Jim. It was nonsense, she told herself angrily, to be anxious for the safety of an experienced agent who was well able to look after himself, but all the same there had been something triumphant in the way Delegana had taken her pseudo-husband from Bolivia Gardens—something which suggested that the mystery man and his secretary regarded Jim in the light of a capture. They had been so patently glad that she was not accompanying him.

The house was dark and silent as she let herself in with her front-door key, though, when she reached the top landing, shattering snores penetrating the door opposite hers told that, though Mrs. Hazel was well and truly asleep, there was company near at hand.

She was just about to lock her bedroom door when she remembered Jim would have to pass through her room on his way to the bed now made up for him in the dressing-room, and the full significance of her "married" status struck her like a blow. From now, until this particular job was finished, she could hope for no privacy unshared by her working-partner.

She undressed hastily and jumped into bed, determined to feign sleep when he entered the room.

She need not have worried, for real sleep overcame her long before his return, and she woke to find the light blazing in her eyes, and Jim, clad in dressing-gown and pyjamas, standing at the foot of her bed.

"Sorry to disturb you," he said, "but I thought I'd better report myself back, in case you woke up later and wondered if I was still out. I've just made some cocoa on the gas-ring; better have some."

"Do you mean to say," asked Aaron, sitting up and taking the cup he held out to her, "that you came through this room without my hearing you?"

"Came through, undressed, went out to my bath, came back again, heated the cocoa, shut your window in case you should feel cold when you sat up, and then came over to wake you. Sleuths should be silent-footed, you know."

"They evidently are," said Aaron, sipping her cocoa. She felt completely at ease with this man, who looked so young in his somewhat shaggy grey dressing-gown, and whose lack of self-consciousness look all embarrassment from the somewhat unusual situation. "I pride myself upon being a light sleeper."

"So you are. I just spoke your name, and you woke instantly. Like a fag?"

"Thanks. Tell me what happened to-night. Did you get anything interesting?"

"For a 'positive' report—nothing. From our point of view, yours and mine—a good deal. By Jove, he's feathered his nest nicely, has our J.D.I. That shack in Elm Park Gardens is a positive treasure-house. All very Spanish, with a touch of Moorish occupation thrown in. Brass, pottery, draperies, chapel lamps in old silver, two good Murillos—not a thing out of keeping as far as I could see. All the servants Spanish, too, except one enormous Moor, who brought us coffee and kept oozing in and out of the room like a tame animal, no one taking the least notice of him. Payton was there, of course, and the dark little fellow who was at the

"Silver Lotus." He's a Portuguese, from Setubal. Everyone was terrifically affable to me—quite masey, in fact; but somehow—Aroon, what is your opinion of Delegana?"

Despite the comfortable warmth of the rose-colored eiderdown, only allowed by Mrs. Hazel on the bed of a very privileged lodger, Aroon shivered.

"You'll probably laugh at me, but I'm afraid of him. I think he's dangerous."

"So do I," agreed Jim. Unconcernedly, he seated himself on the end of her bed. "Mind if I put my feet up? There's an infernal draught blowing round my ankles."

Taking her assent for granted, he kicked off his slippers and compressed himself into an unbelievably small space, hands clasped round his shins, chin resting on his drawn-up knees.

"It was the very surface normality of that house which put the wind up me," he continued: "everything was so purposefully conventional, even the talk. Sport, politics, books, plays; just as if we were four ordinary men having coffee and liqueurs—yes, liqueurs, Aroon!—together. We even smoked, and J.D. implied that total abstinence from drinks and smokes was only necessary for the rank and file of the C.T., not for the more intelligent. The fellow has charm, there's no doubt about that; he was using it full strength on me, and infernally cleverly too; not buttering me up or anything, but just enveloping me, as it were, in a warm cloud composed of all the nicer parts of his personality. Why? That's just what I'm wondering, partner. Why should he bother to charm a simple, not too brainy little bourgeois like J. F. Hogan?"

"Because J. F. Hogan is simple and not too brainy, Jim."

"Exactly! Which means, J.D. has some scheme on hand to which someone with Hogan's qualities is necessary—and that scheme, lady, is something outside the C.T. and its kindred organizations, something the wily Juan wants to conceal behind the scene of the occult. Gosh, Aroon, I believe we're getting on to something big—the sort of job one gets only once in one's whole service, and sometimes not even then."

"Do you think," said Aroon, "that I am going to hamper you? Being your so-called wife, I mean."

"On the contrary, the great Panjandrum Himself seemed pleased about our marriage. Both he and Payton have been careful to let me see that they realise I am only in the 'Moon' because of you. They think I'm a besotted ass. No definite opinions of my own, you know; virgin soil, ready for planting with any sort of mental weeds. . . . Oh, by the way, Delegana pressed a cheque into my hand to-night—A little wedding gift," he called it. "Ten quid, no less!"

"Did you take it?"

"You bet I took it! I believe in taking all I can, and we can do with a fiver each. Haven't we earned it? Hang it all! 'Finance' docks your pay because you have a 'cover' employer paying you a salary, and I get nothing for taking incubator classes whenever I can get to headquarters unobserved. I think a graceful note of thanks, written in your truly awful assumed handwriting—flowing, I think is the correct term—to J.D. is clearly indicated. Well, that's me away now. We'd better have a staff conference before you push off to-morrow morning—or rather, later this morning—because I think we want some outside leads, and I'm going to indent for them later on."

He swung his feet off the bed, turned out the light, and opened the window.

Then his voice came from the other side of the room:

"Good-night, partner."

She had not heard him leave the window, though he had passed only a few feet from her pillow, and the closing of the communicating door was almost inaudible.

For some time Aroon lay awake, thinking of the events of the night. The picture of Jim, sitting unconcerned on her bed, his drying hair rising in a copper ridge above his broad, tolerant forehead, his half-seen eyes alight with interest in things other than herself, lingered before her mental vision. In a way he reminded her of her brother Gerald, who had warned her that the men she would meet in Craddock's Own would probably be bounders and cads. Sleepily, she decided that Gerald must meet Jim and revise his opinions. The terms "bounder" and "cad" might have been quite applicable to her ex-husband's friends and cronies, but they were certainly not applicable to the man whom fate and Sir Arthur Craddock had decreed should be her working-partner.

THOUGH Jim had fully intended going to headquarters on the day following his "Moon" initiation, it was nearly a week before he deemed it safe to do so. By then the close observation under which he had been kept by Payton had relaxed, and he was no longer conscious of a shadow padding behind him.

When he reached his objective, he was directed to one of the smaller rooms generally used for liaison meetings between agents, where Sir Arthur Craddock, Wycherly, and Dan Arkwright were already assembled. At the door he stepped back to allow Colonel Lawther to enter the room before him, and knew that S.O. must now be considered a "major stunt" since both Chiefs thought the conference worthy of a personal appearance.

"Sit down, Harry," welcomed the Chief, indicating one of those deep leather chairs which he had wrung from "Finance" with threats and appeals, "and help yourself to a drink—unless you've been teetotal so long that even a small one will impair your coherency."

"As a matter of fact, sir, I've not been T.T. at all. The Senior Don Juan Delegana is no prohibitionist at home."

"From which one assumes that you have been seeing him fairly frequently, Harry."

"Almost lived at his house, sir. I'm his blue-eyed baby boy at the moment; he's even written to Reynolds asking if he may have me attached to him as special driver for an indefinite period."

"And Reynolds?" inquired Sir Arthur.

"Will find the proposal distinctly unfunny, sir."

"Does he propose trying to engage you privately?"

"Not if he can help it. There is a touch of the Hebrew in our J.D. sometimes; he probably thinks he'll get me for less through them. But Renny is not having any—snacks for 'Finance,' sir!"

From the chair occupied by Lawther came a harsh laugh.

"Trust you and Reynolds to fix things up between you, Harry! And 'Finance' can do nothing, since that Reynolds isn't on our regular list!"

Across the room, Jim caught Dan Arkwright's eye, and the latter winked almost imperceptibly. That the great men were unbending like this argued they were pleased about something.

"When you have quite done snarling at 'Finance,'" said the Chief dryly, "we might get down to reports. Now, Bertie, yours."

"Mine is practically negative, sir," said Wycherly, and Dan Arkwright flipped open a notebook in readiness to take down any important points of the reports. "So far, my only contact with S.O. has been when I took Myra Crawford to a public meeting yesterday evening. She is very intrigued with the whole C.T. idea, and Delegana's lecture on 'The Wider Understanding' made a deep impression on her."

"Myra Crawford," interposed Sir Arthur—"is she any relation to Sir Horace Crawford—the boot man, and Conservative M.P. for Midhampton?"

"His daughter, sir. I am by way of being captive of her bow and spear. I say, Harry, who is 'The Beloved' they were talking about from the platform?"

"Delegana's latest find, Pablo Alvarez, the 'Inspired Child,' Reincarnation of Mahomed and others whom one might term seconds-in-command."

"Is he a black?" asked Lawther.

"No, sir; J.D. discovered him in Gran Canaria, among the cave-dwellers there, and, as far as I can understand, practically bought him from his parents for some small sum. Lost Atlantis stunt, you know, and, by Jove! the kid looks it. He can't be more than fifteen, but he's over six foot, and golden fair—about the best-looking youngster I've ever seen. Clever, too; can pick up languages like pebbles on a beach, and memorise a written speech in a marvellously short time. They're going to bring him out at a monster meeting next month, and he's to be the chief draw at their summer camp in Holland next August."

"From what I can see, sir, Delegana is trying to Westernise Eastern philosophy. Chaos in Europe, and leave the East to stew in its own juice, is the mark they aim to hit, as far as I can make out."

"Any proof of this, Harry?"

"No, sir. Just a vague idea. You see, I've only been in with J.D. for six days."

"Not a bad six days' work, either," commented Wycherly. "You seemed to be quite one of the lads at the meeting last night. Acting A.D.C. to Delegana, as far as I could see."

"I was. As I reported before, sir"—Jim turned to the Chief—"Payton was sent beforehand to spy out the land where I was concerned, hence my night-trek to Coventry. He checked up on me for quite a while before I was allowed to meet J.D. Now I'm not even being tailed, as far as I can discover."

"You're not," agreed Sir Arthur. "Weekly reports you clear for the past five days—and nights. He says they've laid off Vic, too."

"Good!" said Jim thankfully. "She never spots when she's being followed. I had to stop her going near Rita's flat on that account, directly we teamed up."

"Any complaints about her, Harry?"

"None, sir. She's as good a partner as anyone could want, and, as you must have seen, Bertie, pretty well flawless as a Comparative."

"I back you there, Myra was asking her questions after the meeting, and Vic was so convincing that I almost felt like joining the Comparatives myself!"

"May she be forgiven! What do you want done about the Crawford girl, sir? Is she to be allowed to join, or are we to put her off?"

"Certainly not," was the ruthless answer. "She must be encouraged to join. We can't make omelettes without breaking eggs, and

If Crawford can't look after his own daughter she will have to be the egg. Delegans is probably looking for a political pull through Crawford, and his daughter may give us a lead back in that direction. Goodness knows we need one badly enough. We can't afford to be little gentlemen on a job like this, Harry."

"I hoped you'd say that, sir. By the way, Colonel Lawther told me that if I asked for help, sir, you and he would be ready to mobilise Craddock's Own by battalions. May I have a few more, sir?"

"Certainly. This has become your show." "Well, sir, from now on I shall be rather tied, under J.D.'s eye all the time, and, as I come across various lines, I'll need someone to hold on to them. Also, I'd like to have another man inside, if I may."

"Choose your man."

"Topsy, sir."

"Very well. His present job finished this morning. He is in 'store' now."

Not by a quiver did anyone show the surprise felt at Jim's choice. As Brownrigg had once said in mess, few people cared to work with Reuben Goldsmid, nicknamed "Topsy" from the bunch of greasy black curls which were inclined to coalesce into a nigger-like topknot above his heavily marked brows.

"May we ask why Topsy?" Lawther voiced the others' thoughts. "We all know he doesn't exactly excel in co-operative action, Harry."

"That's just it, sir. I've plenty of co-operation as it is, and his lone-hand methods are just what's wanted in the 'Moon.' Also, he's clever, never slacks, and is absolutely unscrupulous: three qualifications best suited to S.O. Now, about passing in reports, sir . . ."

For the next half-hour conversation was strictly technical, the four men, of such varying age and seniority, working as one in arranging the method by which urgent reports were to reach headquarters, while Dan, silent in the background, took notes of any vital point.

"Well, that's that!" said Sir Arthur at length. "As watertight as we can make it, I think. Myself, I don't see any possible point of leakage, but we'd better alter the procedure every fourteen days or so—just in case of accidents. We'll keep Blaster standing by in case there should be a Communist end to it. Now, Harry, off you go and fix things up with your Jewish paragon—you'll find him in the ante-room right now. Better stay to supper with the mess; I'll see you get away unseen afterwards."

"Sorry, sir, but Vic and I are dining at Elm Park Gardens. J.D. is throwing a dinner-party to-night."

"To which Myra and I have also been invited," said Wycherly. "So we'll be formally introduced to each other."

"Then I'll be seeing you," returned Jim. He clicked to attention in salute before Sir Arthur and Colonel Lawther, and, with a nod to Dan Arkwright, left the room so quickly that they hardly realised he had gone.

"And I once told that man," said Sir Arthur, "he would be no earthly use in 'hush.' If he goes on as he's begun in this job, he ought to bring out something worth having in the end."

JIM found Goldsmid alone in the ante-room, crouching over the fire. One glance at his face told that he was in the midst of one of those moods of angry depression which often made him such a difficult man to handle.

He looked up as Jim came to the fireside, his dark eyes alight with something which was very near to hate, and, rising, made as if to leave the room.

"Whither away, Topsy?" Jim countered unerringly striking the right note with his moody colleague. "Sit down, man, and be sociable . . . I'm so seldom in store these days that I want to hear all the gossip. Whisky for you? Right—! Give us decent Irish doubles, Mummy, not the sort that masquerade as such in London," he called to the mess waiter. "And have a beer yourself on me, Mummy, to drink success to Mr. Goldsmid and my work together."

"Very good, Mr. Harry—pardon, Haugh."

"Granted, Mummy—pardon, Mr. Mumford. Make it whisky, if you like, you deserve it after that effort."

"Thank you, Mr. Haugh!"

"Get out, you old villain," laughed Jim. "I suppose you think if you go on chanting my name correctly I'll stand you champagne!"

"One thing I envy you, Harry," said Goldsmid, when the grinning Mumford had withdrawn in good order, "is your easy manner with servants. I either bully or cringe to them, fully conscious that they despise me either way. I say, did you mean what you said to him? About our working together?"

"I did. I went bleating to the Chief to-day for more lines of communication and a spot of inside help. For a wonder, he let me choose my own 'inside' man."

A deep flush spread over Goldsmid's sallow face. "What made you pick on me, Harry? You know my reputation."

"For playing a lone hand? That's just why I want you, Topsy. By the way, you'll have to join the 'Moon.'"

"I'm in it already. Ultimate degree, Moon, and Aspirant Prince in the 'Kings.' I was on S.O. seven years ago, Harry. Then they put Smoke in, and we couldn't work together, so they took me out and put Griggs in my place."

"Good lord! I never knew that! Who was responsible?"

"Need you ask? The Black Prince, of course! Did it on his own while the chief was on leave. Does he know you've asked for me?"

"He does. He was among those present at the conference just now."

"And raised no objection?"

"He knew better. Once the chief has told a fellow he may pick his own team, he abides by the choice. If I'd asked for Mumford as a female impersonator he'd have been seconded to me forthwith. Now, since we appear to have this baronial hall entirely to ourselves, I vote we go into a huddle . . ."

They worked together for some time on the details of "Joseph Lewis," reappearance in C.T. circles, testing each thread of Goldsmid's one-time identity to see if it were strong enough to bear reweaving in its old pattern, and finding, much to their satisfaction, that the finished whole had borne the stress of time.

"Good enough," said Jim at last. "I'm thinking Fate took a hand when she saw to it that your job finished yesterday, Topsy."

He was certain now that his choice had been a wise one, for Goldsmid, pleased beyond measure at the unusual occurrence of anyone's actually wanting to work with him, showed an enthusiasm for the forthcoming job quite out of keeping with his general reputation.

This was work after his own heart. Wise in the ways of the occult, he had been "on" S.O. at frequent intervals ever since he had joined Craddock's Own, shortly after the war. With a Jew's quick grasp of ritual he could get behind the scenes, as it were, and read the significance of much that was incomprehensible to a purely Occidental mind.

"By the way," Jim remarked thoughtfully, "there's some amateur intelligence laddo in Silver Lotus, calls himself Bishop, quite a youngster. He was one of the visiting brethren at my initiation, and was just a trifle too enthusiastic, I thought, so I tipped Weekly the wink to trail him home."

"Where to?"

"Imperial Britons Headquarters, eventually, though Weekly says he made quite a good throw-off line getting there. Someone ought to tell the Imperial Britons to keep their boys at home; S.O. is no place for untrained sleuths from patriotic organizations."

"That particular organisation has been told," said Goldsmid. "Lawther went himself when Blaster reported they were hampering him on that W.R.G. job, but, as one would have expected, nothing came of it. The head cook-and-bottle-washer was away on a colonial tour, and it was a case of second-in-command meeting second-in-command with disastrous results. Apparently this fellow as good as told Lawther that all British Intelligence, from the C.I.D. to Craddock's Own, was riddled with traitors, and the only patriots in the whole Empire belonged to the Imperial Britons. Can you picture the Black Prince's reactions?"

"I can! Pity the Chief didn't go himself, or send Dan. Look here, do I know you in the C.T., or shall we meet as strangers?"

"As strangers. Get Vic to introduce us; I met her at last year's congress."

"Good," said Jim. "And I'd better be pushing off now. I have to assume glad rags for this confounded dinner. I'll be seeing you!"

He had reached the door when Goldsmid called him back.

"Harry?"

"Hullo?"

"Thank you for getting me on the job. I won't let you down."

"I never thought you would," returned Jim, somewhat embarrassed by the other man's sincerity. "Cheerio, Topsy."

ARON was already dressed for the evening when Jim entered the bedroom, and he stopped short with an exclamation of admiration.

"Talk about the Queen of Sheba! You'll cause a sensation to-night!"

Great jade rings swung against her cleverly tinted cheeks as she turned from the dressing-table, every line of her superb figure accentuated by the clinging gown of green velvet.

"Am I too noticeable? Ought I to wear black, or something quieter than this?"

"Not on your life! That jade-colored outfit is the very I.T. It's just the contrast we want—beautiful wife overshadowing her insignificant husband; you've taken me in your stride, as it were. You're the shop window of this show, my dear."

"Good!" said Aron. "That's where I was aiming, but I didn't know if it were in the right direction. By the way, Jim, that young Imperial has been snooping round to-day. He asked Ma Hazel if she would let him a room."

"Did she?"

"Not definitely. She got in touch with Weekly, and asked him to notify Headquarters and send her instructions."

"I wonder what they'll say? He ought to be here for his own safety, but he'd be an infernal nuisance. It would mean we'd have to be careful inside as well as out, and I'm all for a spot of peace in the home. Heaven! Is that the time? I shan't be long, dressing Aroon."

He disappeared into the dressing-room, and a moment later he put his head round the door.

"I say, Aroon, who laid out my clothes?"

"I did."

"Thanks awfully."

The head was withdrawn, but the door remained ajar.

"By Jove, you've sewn a button on my evening bag!"

"Seeing that they were depending for support on one brace button, I thought it advisable, my lad!"

"Still more thanks. Being married is rather a good stunt, Aroon."

Aroon laughed. The conversation shouted from room to room was good fun, she thought.

"Real husbands don't always think so."

"Perhaps real wives aren't so satisfactory."

"Probably not. Anyway, they are supposed to have the last word."

"Something subtle in that, Aroon—I've not got there."

"Last words, idiot!"

"Yours," corrected Jim.

"I scratch," laughed Aroon, and left it with Jim.

"Mrs. Hogan" certainly did cause a sensation when she preceded Jim into the consciously Spanish lounge where Juan Delegana received his guests. At her entrance, Myra Crawford, the only other well-dressed woman present, faded into insignificance, and Wycherly, in his role of sophisticated man-about-town, raised his eyebrows, and stared at her with slightly insolent admiration.

Delegana, lifting her hand, continental fashion, to his lips, murmured in his purring voice, "Mrs. Hogan, you do my poor house honor. You grow more beautiful every time I see you."

But his eyes looked past her to Jim, as though this lovely woman were, for him, a mere adjunct to her husband. A fact which did not escape the notice of either of the male members of Craddock's Own.

To an observer in full possession of the real facts, the formal introduction of the three "hush" agents to each other would have been not without humor.

Wycherly, clad in what female novelists love to call "immaculate evening dress"—he was wearing tails, since he and Myra were due at a charity ball later on—managed to convey, while tendering his homage to Aroon, that he considered her husband a bit of an outsider. Myra Crawford, on the other hand, showed a tendency to be distant towards Aroon, combined with a marked preference for Jim.

She was a small, fair girl, her ineffectual prettiness marred by slightly protruding teeth. A silly little thing, Jim decided, not unintelligent, but lacking in definite character, easy prey for S.O.s, especially as her background contained a rich, political father.

He felt a grudging admiration for the way in which Delegana was treating her as guest of the evening, taking her in to dinner himself, though Jim was certain he would have

preferred to partner Aroon, who had been delegated to Wycherly. Jim himself took in the little grey woman whom he had named "Wispie Winnie," while her friend Karma Clara and Payton were each paired respectively with a retired Indian civilian and his wife, ex-Theosophists, who had transferred their allegiance to Comparative Thought.

Dinner was an excellent meal, served at a round table of beautifully polished mahogany, in the centre of which a huge crystal bowl, floodlit, and containing small, brightly colored fish, took the place of conventional floral decorations.

The constant movement of the tiny vivid fish, swimming tirelessly in their bright prison, combined with the silent-footed efficiency of the service, and Delegana's voice purring away to Myra, had a slightly hypnotic effect, keeping the conversational pitch several tones lower than is usual around a London dinner-table.

Jim was glad he had been allotted Wispie Winnie. She called for no mental effort, and an occasional monosyllable from him was sufficient to keep up her steady flow of innocuous prattle. This allowed his trained ear to pick up anything of interest from the buzz of general talk, and he proceeded to take a mental tour of the table in search of those crumbs which so often fall, usefully, to the Intelligence dog at a rich man's table.

On the far side of the circle, Wycherly was deluging Aroon with a spate of conversational nothings, true to his supposed type, and her expression of polite boredom was a triumph.

Next them, Karma Clara and the Indian Civilian were discussing reincarnation; and, beyond them, Payton was enduring a monologue on color-influences from the Civilian's wife. Nothing worth listening-in on at either place.

Turning a courteous, if inattentive, ear to Wispie Winnie, Jim switched over to Delegana, who had just bent confidentially towards Myra Crawford.

"And when are you going to become one of us, little lady?" he was saying.

"Just as soon as ever my father will let me, Mr. Delegana."

"This must be looked into," said Delegana softly. "Parental authority is an excellent thing, but its severity should be tempered with understanding where the spiritual life of the child is concerned. We shall have to convert your father, my dear."

"I'm afraid you'll never do that, Mr. Delegana."

"Never" is a word the existence of which I do not admit, little lady. I had to do a considerable amount of—persuading—with the Beloved's earthly parents before they could be brought to recognise their child's destiny. And the Beloved Child is now beneath my roof. I do not look upon your father's opposition as insurmountable, Miss Crawford."

The quiet determination in his voice sent a shiver down Jim's spine. Not for nothing was he wasting time on this vivid young woman. Sir Horace Crawford, baronet and bootmaker, was to be of some future use to the far-seeing President of Comparative Thought.

Turning his attention to his dinner-partner, he managed to get off two quite long sentences himself; then, having supplied the good lady with material for the next twenty minutes, tuned in once more to Delegana and Myra Crawford.

"And where is the Beloved Child?" asked the girl. "I hope we are going to see him this evening."

"Certainly not!" said Delegana curtly. "He is not on view like a travelling freak. If you wish to gaze on him, you can do so at his public appearance next month. Till then, he is to be spared contact with the uninitiated. He meets no one privately except my most intimate friends."

His tone was so much that of a priest rebuking an intruder caught about to commit sacrilege that Myra flushed to the roots of her pale hair, and Jim felt utterly amazed. He had not counted himself as one of Delegana's "intimate friends," yet Pablo Alvarez had been constantly in his company when he was at Elm Park Gardens.

Mentally, he stowed away that remark for future study, for he had long ago learned never to concentrate on any particular subject in the presence of a clever man. From their first meeting, he had not allowed himself the luxury of undisciplined thought when in Delegana's company.

Across the table he could hear Aroon saying:

"My husband is a very young soul, Mr. Wycherly. He has a long way to go before he perfects his Karma, but his progress is a very steady—"

True to his part, Wycherly murmured, "Quite," and, looking rather nonplussed, changed the subject.

Hardly had the womenfolk left the dining-room, when Delegana rose from his place, and excused himself to the company.

"Payton will entertain you, gentlemen, but I have something of importance I must show to Hogan. Come, Hogan."

In the hall he laid his hand on Jim's arm.

"Do you mind if I drop the 'Hogan'?" he asked.

"Not in the least, sir. My first name is Jim."

"Then I shall call you Jaime—that is the Spanish version. Come to my study, Jaime. I have had a letter from your garage people which I want you to see. No one is admitted to my sanctum save on my invitation, so we shall be quite undisturbed."

He led the way upstairs, their footsteps soundless on the thick black stair-carpet, but Jim had an idea that even had it been over bare boards the other's padding foot-falls would have made no sound.

"Ah, Jaime—the comfort of getting away from a crowd, of being quite alone with one congenial soul—"

The opening of the study door was as noiseless as was all movement in that strange house, but Delegana's hoped-for tete-a-tete was not to be.

As the door-handle turned, they heard the sound of a hasty movement within the room, and, when they entered, a man was standing awkwardly in the centre of the floor, and a tell-tale corner of paper protruding from the roll-top desk by the window told it had been hurriedly closed down.

Jim recognised him instantly. He was the man who called himself "Blahop"—the amateur sleuth from the Imperial Britons' Headquarters.

FOR some minutes no word was spoken. Standing just inside the door, Delegana forced the young man's eyes to meet his, holding them in a fixed stare, till the well-built, athletic form stiffened, and he began

to sway on his feet, like someone going under an anaesthetic.

Then Delegana spoke, in a surprisingly gentle voice, and only Jim heard the menace beneath its soothing note.

"You wanted me, perhaps? Won't you sit down? I fear there are no comfortable chairs, but this is my workroom, in which I do not usually receive visitors. You are a member of ours?"

The youth was regaining his poise. Things were going better than he had expected.

"Yes, sir, North Hampstead Lodge. I—they told me you were at dinner, and I came in here to wait. I understood you were always willing to see members, sir."

"Quite correct. If only you had sent in your name, I would have asked you to join my small party. Always bring your spiritual difficulties to me, son, and I will do my best to clear them. But not now. To-night the clogging duties of the material world, which beset even such as I, claim my attention. Come to me at—shall we say, the same time to-morrow evening? Then we shall be alone, and together may entangle the knotted skein of your life-pattern—if the Masters so permit."

It was a kindly, courteous dismissal. No questions had been asked as to how the stranger had found his way, unbidden, into the President's sanctum, and triumph at receiving such an invitation rang in the lad's eager acceptance. In imagination, Jim could hear him boasting to his fellow "Britons" how easily he had gate-crashed the famous Delegana's private house.

"I will ring for a servant to see you downstairs," continued Delegana pleasantly. "You might not be able to explain your presence here to them unless you speak Spanish."

But it was in Portuguese that he addressed the manservant who answered the bell.

"This man has been alone in my room for a considerable time; detain him below for a few minutes, and send Parco to me." Then to the young "Briton": "I insist you have a glass of wine before you go—my servant will give it to you; he, alone of my staff, speaks English fairly well."

He nodded a smiling farewell and, the moment the other two men had left the room, went across to his desk and raised the lid.

"Remind me to speak to Payton, Jaime—he is growing very careless over shutting this desk properly."

He turned over a few papers, and, at first, seemed satisfied. Then he picked up a blotting-pad, and, even from a slight distance, Jim could see a faint outline on the black blotting-paper, as though some note had been taken with a blunt pencil, on which the writer had borne heavily.

A soft knock fell on the door, and another of the servants entered the room, a Spaniard this time, who addressed Delegana in his own language.

"You sent for me, Senor?"

"Yes. The man whom Maboo has taken below has copied a certain list of names. Follow him, and get that copy from him. You understand?"

"Perfectly, Senor."

"Then go."

He sat down at his desk, and taking a letter from a pigeon-hole handed it to Jim.

"Your employer is being rather difficult, Jaime; I would like you to read what he says."

Not for nothing was Reynolds of the garage Weekly's elder brother, and an "outside" worker for Craddock's Own. His

letter struck just the right note of regret that he could not see his way to accede to Mr. Delegana's request. He was prepared, he wrote, to allow "our Mr. Hogan" to drive Mr. Delegana whenever possible, but could not think of bringing himself to do without the services of a most efficient salesman for so long a period as six months. He would, however, be willing to provide one of their regular drivers if Mr. Delegana so desired.

"What do you think of that reply to my very reasonable request for you to be my special driver, Jaime?"

"I'm afraid I expected it, sir, Reynolds' don't like changes on their staff, and they'd have had to take someone else on in my place."

"I would have made it worth their while. I am a lonely man, Jaime, and when travelling by car would like more companionship than that of an ordinary chauffeur. I want you. Also, I pay well. Would you consider leaving Reynolds' and taking employment with me?"

Jim's hesitation was artistic.

"I'd like it very much, but—well, you see, I'm married, and if I left Reynolds' I might have difficulty in getting another job after yours was over."

"There need be no other job! I will guarantee—in writing, if you like—that if I have to dispense with your services within the next five years—a most unlikely event, I may tell you—I will see to it that you are amply compensated for any subsequent unemployment."

"In that case—" said Jim, and gave what he knew himself to be a very convincing display of clumsy and ill-worded gratitude.

"Then that is settled," triumphed Delegana. "Give those people your notice to-morrow, and come to me as soon as possible. I need you. And now we will go and suggest to those discourteous gentlemen in the dining-room it is high time they joined the ladies."

He put his arm through Jim's, and together they went downstairs, and as they passed through the hall Jim caught a glimpse of the servant Delegana had addressed as Parco. He was panting, as though he had run some distance at a hard pace.

When they entered the dining-room Delegana nodded to Payton, who came to his side. Speaking in Spanish, he said:

"Got him. No trouble at all. See that his pay is liberal, but not excessive, though it must be well above the sum he has been receiving from his last employers."

At ten o'clock, Myra and Wycherley made their apologies and departed to their ball, followed, some fifteen minutes later, by the Indian Civilian and his wife; Wings Winnie and Karma Churn, who showed signs of staying on, being neatly dislodged by the ever-watchful Payton, who saw that their incessant C.T. "shop" was getting on his master's nerves.

Aroon, rising to follow their example, was detained by a request from her host which amounted almost to a command.

"No, Mrs. Hogan, I cannot permit such an early departure. Having done my duty by my other guests, surely you will not grudge me some little pleasure for myself, at last? Payton, in mercy, turn off some of this cruel illumination!"

Obediently, Payton clicked switches, and the light in the big hanging bowls died, leaving only a soft glow from concealed lighting thrown on the painted ceiling.

A faintly aromatic scent rose from the fir-branches burning in a Spanish brazier

which stood on the open hearth, and Aroon, in her green frock, looked like some exotic goddess seated in a high-back chair of beautifully wrought Cordova leather.

Silent-footed, the huge Moorish manservant brought sherry, of a kind seldom tasted out of Spain.

And then, sitting half in shadow, the leaping flames striking random gleams from his curious, amber-colored eyes, Delegana threw off the cloak of aloof mystery in which he habitually wrapped himself, to disclose yet another personality, as different from the awe-inspiring President of Comparative Thought, as it was from the stave, conventional host of that evening's dinner-party.

This new Delegana was a fascinating person. Gay, witty, sometimes subtly cruel, yet never crude, he set himself to charm his two remaining guests. Like a clever showman, he spread before them his vast knowledge of places and men, leading the conversation always, yet referring to his companions in a way which left no doubt that he considered their opinion worth hearing. Listening to him, surrendering to his charm just enough to prevent his sending a watchful barrier, Jim knew that he wished them to think this was the real Delegana, the delightful, simple-hearted Juan known only to his intimates.

Alert as a terrier at a rat-hole, Jim would have given much to know why this man should trouble to cast his intellectual pearls before swine, as represented by a very ordinary motor salesman and his wife. Yet, since even the most efficient secret agent is not infallible, he was not to know that, for the first time in his unscrupulous, egotistical career, Juan Delegana had conceived a genuine affection for another human being.

The "Hogans" did no more than exchange a few non-committal remarks during their short walk home that night, though they were quite aware that they were not being followed, but the habit of caution had become part of themselves. On reaching No. 11, Aroon went straight to her bedroom, while Jim wandered into the sitting-room, in order to give her time to undress before going through to his own bed.

Glancing at the clock, he switched on the radio, catching the announcer, in the middle of reading a police message:

"... just beyond the junction of Park Walk with the Fulham Road, and received injuries from which he has since died. Will the man who was seen to stumble, and who lost several pedestrians in an effort to regain his balance, or anyone who may have witnessed the accident, please communicate with New Scotland Yard, telephone Whitehall 1212?"

Switching off the set, Jim crossed to the fireplace, and stood for a few minutes gazing into the unlit gas fire.

"I wonder," he said to himself. "I wonder..."

He did not have long to speculate, for, as he was returning from his bath a short while later, he heard the telephone night-extension ring in Mrs. Hogan's bedroom, and a moment later the landlady came out on the landing.

"For you, sir. One of our people."

It was a seemingly innocent conversation which Jim held with Weekly over the wire, during which they both agreed that a certain footballer was not up to professional standard, and should never have been signed-on for their favorite side; but it sent Jim from the room deeply thoughtful.

"I'm sorry to have kept you so long in the cold, Mrs. Hazel," he apologised, with an apprehensive glance at the large bare feet set flatly on the chilly oilcloth. "We were as brief as possible."

"Lor, bless you, sir, that weren't nothing! I've sat on this 'ere landing for a 'ole 'arf-hour sometimes when Mr. Weekly was with me. I larked to meself when I 'eard 'is code-word to-night. All right, sir... I'll put me slippers on next time, if it's only to please you."

Aroon was reading in bed, the net which she wore at night in an effort to keep her protesting hair in its severe Aroon Hogan lines, giving her face a somewhat nun-like appearance.

She closed her book as Jim came into the room, keeping her finger between the pages to mark her place, and as an indication that she did not wish for prolonged conversation that night.

"I heard the telephone, Jim. Anything wrong?"

"Not for us—unless there are repercussions. That youth in the 'Britons'—Bishop is his lodge name—fell under a bus to-night just after he left Elm Park Gardens."

"Fell?"

"As Weekly put it, 'Did he fall, or was he pushed?' Even the police suspect the pushing! Weekly knows—he saw it happen."

"But I didn't know that I.B. boy was to be at Elm Park Gardens to-night."

"Nor did anyone. He apparently slipped in while we were at dinner. J.D. and I surprised him alone in the study, where he'd obviously been tampering with the desk. His getting there at all without being spotted was pretty good, but he lost his head badly when caught, and mucked his excuse for being there beyond redemption."

"I suppose J.D. was furious?"

"Not outwardly. He purred, but I knew he'd made up his mind what was going to be done."

Aroon's novel slipped from her fingers and fell unheeded on the floor.

"Are you trying to tell me he was murdered?"

"Say 'quietly eliminated'—murder is too robust a term."

"But why was it done?"

"He'd copied some paper—a list of names, I think. I saw the imprint on the blotting-pad, and heard J.D. telling his servant to go after him."

"Do you mean to say," asked Aroon, "that you knew this was going to happen?"

"Not quite in the way it did—but I heard orders being given to tail him."

"And you never warned the poor boy?"

"How could I, without giving away that I understood Portuguese?"

"You could have made some excuse—got outside to speak to him somehow. It's terrible to think of your doing nothing to save him!"

A blue gleam showed between Jim's lashes, and there was a note in his voice Aroon had never heard before.

"You and I," he said, "have been put on one specific job—a job, moreover, which, even at the beginning, shows signs of being the biggest we are ever likely to get. Our work is to trace the thread which we suspect is leading from Juan Delegana back to the devil's storehouse of world unrest from which he draws his supplies. We're on a single track, my girl, and side-lines are not our business."

"No personal inclinations towards kindness, humanity—even to the saving of a life—must be allowed to divert us from our

course or impair our efficiency. Good Lord, girl! Do you think I enjoyed letting that man walk out of J.D.'s house to what I half guessed might be his death, when a word of warning from me could have put him on his guard?"

"But I'm not trusted by the Chief, or paid by that branch of His Majesty's Service known as 'Investigations, seditious movements of, and Persons concerned therein' in order to go Galahading round London saving amateur slouts from the inevitable results of their own untrained foolhardiness. Hang it, Aroon, if he'd been one of our own people even, I wouldn't have been justified in busting an identity wide open, thereby warning J.D. and all connected with him that they were under observation!"

"Get this into your head right now. You and I are spies, Aroon—dirty, low-down spies, if you like—but as necessary to the continued existence of a civilized community as are scavengers to the health of a city."

"We're fighting for peace in our time, and freedom for the ordinary people, Aroon—freedom for the little man to run his business and tend his garden, for the farmer to grow his crops and find a market, for the servant-maid to go to the pictures on her night-out—freedom to worship in our own particular way—the God of our fathers, whatever form He may take for us."

"Craddock's Own may only be a drop of clarifying fluid in an ocean of filth, but it's a mighty potent drop, and if we can wash one yard of the world's shores clean while we're on duty, we've done our job, and that's all there is to it. Now do you see why it is necessary sometimes to let one man suffer for the nation?"

"Yes," said Aroon faintly, "I think I do."

She was feeling just a little afraid of Jim. Something of what she was thinking communicated itself to him, for he threw back his head and went off in a peal of laughter.

"Poor old partner! A bit thick to be ranting at so late in the day! Oh, I forgot to tell you, I'm leaving Reynolds' to-morrow. J.D. wants me as his special driver at once, if not sooner."

"Are you taking it on?"

"I should rather think so! Since my boyish charm has captivated our noble President, who am I to point out that he is nursing a snake in his bosom—or should I have said a viper? I'm afraid it will mean you'll have to work a lot alone, Aroon, but you'll have Topsy on the 'inside' with you, and a good little Comparative like you won't grudge your husband to the Cause. 'I could not love thee, dear, so much, loved I not C.T. more.' Play up to that for all you're worth, my child."

"I will. But be careful, Jim—it's such a dangerous game."

"All 'hush' work is dangerous at intervals," returned Jim lightly. "If it wasn't, we'd die of boredom in our first year. Don't worry, Aroon, only the good die young, and in the unlikely event of my being bumped off you'll make a marvellous widow! Good-night."

The communicating door closed behind him, and Aroon took up her book from the table beside her bed. It was a good novel, well written and humorous, but, try as she would, she could not concentrate on the story. The thought of Jim, dally, hourly, in the company of a man who had not hesitated to order the death of a stranger whom he suspected of tampering with his desk, filled her with apprehension.

Not that she felt any personal fear, nor,

she tried to assure herself, was her anxiety for Jim anything more than distaste for the idea that she might have to start all over again with a new working-partner. Yet a little tagging worry kept her awake for some considerable time. It was only when honesty won, and she admitted to herself that the thought of being Jim's "widow" was not as marvellous as he had supposed, that sleep finally closed her heavy eyelids.

BY Craddock's orders Jim did not work out his notice with the garage before entering Delegana's service.

On the morning following the dinner-party, he and the elder Reynolds staged a very realistic row, in which the latter informed him, in tones which could be heard all over the showroom, that if he wished to act chauffeur to a "beastly foreigner" he was at liberty to do so at once, but that he need never darken Reynolds' doors again, nor hope for a reference from his outraged employer; and Jim flung out of the garage, exhibiting every outward sign of impetuous, youthful fury.

All of which was shortly reported to Delegana by the well-dressed man with a foreign accent who entered the showroom shortly after Jim had gone through to the office, under the pretext of inquiring about a car.

So his welcome at Elm Park Gardens was rather in the nature of that accorded by adoring parents to an only son who has been unjustly expelled from school. Delegana, Payton, and even the servants, conspired to make much of him, subtly conveying the idea that Jim had been victimised for his membership of Comparative Thought.

"Their loss, however, is my gain, Jaime," said Delegana. "I have found it necessary to dispense with the services of Parco, who usually drove my car, so the arbitrary behaviour of your late employer is, without doubt, a special intervention of the Masters on my behalf."

How such dispensation had been accomplished, Jim never fully knew, but Parco vanished from Delegana's entourage, and he doubted if the unfortunate man would ever again walk the streets of his native Las Palmas.

That afternoon he took over charge of the saloon, and assisted his employer in the purchase of a 22 h.p. cabriolet, listed at nine-hundred-and-fifty pounds, but pushed up well over the thousand mark by the astute salesman, on whose advice Delegana added several unnecessary extras. It was with deep regret that Jim saw the deal go through a garage other than Reynolds', especially as Delegana paid outright, scorning the custom of hire-purchase.

On returning to Elm Park Gardens, after having garaged the saloon, Jim was not surprised to find an obvious plain-clothes man in the Spanish lounge.

"Ah, Jaime!" began Delegana. "This gentleman has been asking all sorts of questions as to what happened at my little party the night before last. Perhaps you, as one of my guests on that occasion, can give him some information. If it would not be troubling you, Mr.—he consulted the card in his hand—"Mr. Parsonage, perhaps you will step in here."

He led the way to the Spanish lounge. "A sherry, Mr. Parsonage? No! Perhaps a trifle early in the day, Jaime, this gentleman has been sent from Scotland Yard. He belongs, I understand, to the Criminal Investigation Department. He has already asked me a number of questions, and is

anxious to repeat the process with you. Inspector Parsonage—Mr. Hogan.

"How do you do?" said Jim politely, the Irish accent he affected in his Hogan incarnation more than usually pronounced.

"You are Irish?"

"I am, sir."

The Inspector frowned. He objected to Irishmen in general, and instantly decided that he disliked this one in particular.

"Full name?" he barked.

"James Francis Hogan, sir."

"Address?"

Jim gave it, together with his age, occupation, and other details required by the police officer, and though no one could have said he was either impertinent or obstructive, yet the seething resentment he seemed to feel at being interrogated would have been plain to the most casual observer.

Seating himself by the fire, Juan Delegana lifted a huge Persian cat on to his knee, keeping his eyes cast down as he caressed the smoke-blue fur, lest the Inspector should see something of the elation he was feeling. He had counted on Jim's national antipathy to the police.

It would be an exaggeration to say that there was a feud between Craddock's Own and the C.I.D.; there were even times when they worked together in mutual amiability, but, human nature being what it is, neither cared to miss the chance of scoring off the other. The C.I.D., hampered by police regulations, their actions often cramped by an interfering and censorious public, felt a certain amount of natural jealousy for the wider scope allowed to "hush" men, while the latter, ruthlessly trained and specialised, bore for the C.I.D. the patronising contempt given by experts towards men they considered novices at their own dangerous game.

This time, however, it was plain sailing. All Jim had to do was to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, tinged, ever so faintly, by suppression as regards his knowledge of Spanish and Portuguese.

So the interrogation proceeded in a simple and straightforward manner, infuriating to an energetic officer seeking a conviction.

Yes, Jim had been at Delegana's house the night before last; had dined there, in fact. Yes, his wife and other people had been present. Could he give their names? Certainly. It had been a small party—he enumerated the guests, Parsonage checking the names from the list he had already obtained from Delegana.

Had Jim accompanied Mr. Delegana to his study after dinner? Oh yes. Might the Inspector ask why? Of course! To see a letter written from Jim's firm. Oh no, nothing private; in fact, if the Inspector could credit it . . . And before the unlucky officer knew what was happening, Jim was off on a highly-colored description of the scene in Reynolds' office, rich in Irish phrase and idiom, and, at some points, almost unintelligible to English ears. When, at last, the infuriated man cut him short, Jim favored him with the reproachful stare of one who had encountered yet another example of Anglo-Saxon discourtesy.

"Please keep to the point, Mr. Hogan. I'm not interested in your private affairs."

"Sure, wasn't I only explaining why I was in the study at all?"

"I asked for information, not for your family history," was the heavily sarcastic retort. "Please be brief."

"One up to me," thought Jim, and settled down to enjoy further interrogation.

Yes, he had seen a young man in the study. No, he did not know him, not to speak to, though he had seen him at C.T. meetings, and believed his name to be Bishop. Did Mr. Delegana seem surprised at seeing the man Bishop in his study? Yes—surprised, but not annoyed. Did he suggest seeing the man again? Oh yes. He arranged for him to visit his house the next evening. Mr. Delegana was President of the Comparative Thought Society, did the Inspector know? Any member could come to him for advice whenever he or she wished—a great tax on Mr. Delegana, but he was so kind about—

Cut short again, he continued to answer such questions as were put to him, finally establishing the fact that, from the time they entered the study till Mr. and Mrs. James Francis Hogan left for their own lodgings, Delegana was never for one minute out of Jim's company.

"And at what time," asked the detective, fixing his eyes on Jim's face with the unwavering stare which he usually found so effective, "did you and your wife leave this house?"

"It must have been a wee bit after half-past eleven, because it wasn't long after that we were back in our lodgings in Beauchamp Road."

"How is it that you are so sure of the time?"

"Because I turned on the wireless, and the announcer was just in the middle of a police message before the late news."

"Do you remember the subject of that message?"

"Something about some fellow being killed in Fulham Road—usual 1212 business, you know. I'm afraid I didn't take much notice."

"Even though that message concerned the young man whom you had seen in Mr. Delegana's study?"

"Holy Mike!" exclaimed Jim. "Is this true, Mr. Delegana?"

Delegana nodded. "Unfortunately, Jaime, it is."

"Oh!" said Jim, in the manner of one who sees light on a hitherto puzzling problem. "Now I understand! Why didn't you tell me that before? It would have made all the difference."

"Difference?" The Inspector's tone was ambiguous. "What difference?"

"Well, I'd have given you the whole works without waiting to have it dragged from me the way I did. You see I thought you were only practising, sort of police manoeuvres."

The officer made an explosive sound, indicative of intense irritation.

The interrogation over, it was Jim who escorted the fuming Parsonage to the hall door and directed him to No. 11, where, he assured him, his landlady would probably remember the hour at which he had left his lodgings and the approximate time of his return. Mrs. Hazel, he knew, could be trusted to tie up the most minute questioner in swatches of entirely irrelevant information regarding her lodgers' characters and habits.

He laughed softly as he watched the stocky figure in its thick overcoat striding purposefully to its doom. Mrs. Hazel's story of the interview, he thought, would be good value. Yet, despite his amusement, he was not too pleased with the turn events had taken. The attention of the police, once focused on the house in Elm Park Gardens, would probably remain there for some time, complicating matters all round, and making regular observation difficult for Weekly.

So his slightly worried expression when he returned to the lounge was not entirely assumed.

Delegana did not appear to have moved since Jim and the police officer had left him. He sat very still in the deep fireside chair, only his hand moving in a slow, steady motion from the cat's head down the length of its back, then to the head again. A noise like a small dynamo running filled the room, so loud that at first Jim could not believe it was caused by the cat's purring.

"No need to look so distressed, Jaime, mid," he said softly. "No harm has been done. In this law-abiding England, where everyone lives to a set pattern, a man like myself is necessarily under suspicion. Someone visits this house, and, on leaving it, meets with a regrettable accident. What more natural than that the uninspired imagination of these island-dwellers should snatch at the suggestion that Juan Delegana, who does so many unusual things, and employs such queer foreign servants, is somehow responsible for that accident?"

"But you never left the house, sir—"

"Ah, yes, I know that. But tales have been spread about me, Jaime—rumors which say I can influence people even at a distance; I am credited with being something of a magician—such gossip! But the authorities do not worry me, for I am on the right side of the law."

"Wouldn't trouble me if you were not," muttered Jim. "I hate the police, anyway."

Delegana smiled. "You show your nationality there, Jaime! Somehow, I think you will serve me faithfully. I shall take you all the way with me, initiating you to mysteries which will give you power over other men. You are not afraid of me, Jaime?"

"I am not," replied Jim. "Is there any reason why I should be?"

"Look at me!" commanded Delegana. "Look full in my eyes."

Unhesitatingly Jim obeyed, meeting the amber-colored eyes, now glowing with a golden light which was somehow evil. A force strong as an electric current seemed to pass between himself and the other, as though that entity which men called Juan Delegana were seeking to enter his very being and, having entered, take possession.

For the first time since he had begun to work for Craddock's Own, Jim was afraid. Never before had he felt so alone, so stripped of the protective covering with which each man masks his soul. And he dared not think of the Chief or his own work, lest the mind behind that compelling gaze should read his thoughts.

His immediate surroundings vanished in a mist through which only those twin points glowed, concentrated on a point between Jim's eyebrows, as though they would burn through the frontal bone to the brain it protected. The room, the cat, Delegana himself, even the faint, far-off sound of a normal London day, had gone from his ken, leaving him alone with that boggy of every "hush" man, the deadly fear that he might yield to hypnotic influence. Then, through the mists which were fast enveloping his consciousness, he became aware of a figure, half seen and unrecognisable, which he yet knew was struggling to reach his side.

"Griggs!"

The cry was purely mental, but an answer came instantly.

"I'm here, Harry. Break the contact now, in any way you like. Do it this once, and you need never fear him again."

Drugging at his scattered senses, Jim sneezed. A heavy sneeze, preceded by realistic wrinkling of his short, blunt nose. Immediately the mists cleared, the band which had been constricting his forehead loosened, and the room reappeared before his normal vision. Gregory had vanished with the mists, and in his place sat Delegana, his eyes still fixed on Jim's forehead, but the power had gone, and, to make quite certain, Jim sneezed again.

"Sorry, sir! Bad habit, exploding like that, though my uncle in Highgate thinks sneezing is lucky. It drives away devils, he says."

"Perhaps he is not so far wrong, Jaime—the Moors also have that belief. Tell me, what sensations did you feel before this wonderful sneeze?"

"Just a tickling in my nose, sir." Then an astonishing thing happened. Delegana laughed. Not the low, mirthless ripple with which he usually signified amusement, but a high, gasping laugh like the neighing of a horse, too discordant to be anything but genuine.

At the sound Payton, who had been working in an adjoining room, came hurriedly through a communicating door, flashing his glasses anxiously in his employer's direction.

"Is anything wrong, Mr. Delegana?"

Delegana laughed again. "There, Jaime, see what you have done! I laugh so seldom that my poor Payton is concerned for my sanity! Ring for coffee, Payton, and fetch me a road-map. I want Jaime to look out our best route to Bascombe. I am thinking of spending this week-end down there. That is, of course, if Mrs. Hogan will spare you, Jaime."

"Of course, sir. She knows I'm working for you, and I was often sent out of town for days on end by Reynolds. She's used to my popping off and leaving her."

When the map was brought, Jim carried it to a table by the window, there to study the shortest route to the lonely house in the Mendips which Delegana had purchased for a country home.

"What is the trouble, Juan?" asked Payton in Spanish. "Something has upset you."

"Shaken, if you like," replied Delegana, in the same tongue, "but not upset. You understand me well, Hector, since you choose the language which comes first to me in moments of emotion."

Apparently intent on the map, Jim was inwardly convulsed, the heroic Christian name was so inappropriate to Payton.

"I tried him with every influence I know," continued Delegana. "Starting with simple hypnotism, and increasing power till I had reached the initiate's formula and could go no further without other aid. Yet he withstood me, Hector, keeping eyes as guileless as a child's fixed on mine, fearless, unwondering, while around him surged influences which would have shaken an initiate of the thirty-third degree."

"Once I thought I had got him; his face contorted, his eyes closed. I was ready—and he sneezed! Sneezed, Hector—making apology to me for what he termed the explosion," leaving me gasping amidst the shattered fragments of my carefully constructed control! Amazing! Wonderful! Do you realise what we have achieved, Hector? That we have, beneath our roof, and at our command, a man absolutely unique in the history of occultism? One who is so magnetic himself that he renders

all other magnetism useless as motor headlights in a thick fog?"

Payton looked frightened. "He'll be a danger—"

"If he knew, he might be, but he is absolutely unaware of his own power. It is lying hidden within him like some great powerful machine lacking a skilled driver. I, my Hector, shall be that driver! The power will be mine, doubled, trebled by my knowledge. Already he is attracted by me. Soon he will be my slave, bound to me by the love a dog gives to its master, mine to use as I will."

"And then?" queried Payton.

"Then I shall have a weapon the like of which no occultist has ever had at his command, a psychic force of unimagined strength, and a mobile one, dirigible, even at a distance, by me alone, clothed in the outward form of a simple, normal young Irishman!"

"Good heavens!" cried Payton, in English.

Delegana swore at him. "Need you lapse into a language he understands?"

Payton took out his handkerchief and wiped a sweating brow.

"It was only an oath," he muttered, "then use some other. Jaime!"

"Yes, sir."

"Have you discovered our best route?"

"I should advise following the ordinary road to Bath, and then cutting over the hills up to Priddy—your house isn't far from the old tin mines, is it, sir? As far as I can see, Charterhouse is the nearest place even marked on the map."

"And it," said Payton resignedly, "is only a handful of houses. Bascombe is the loneliest spot on earth, Hogan."

"My poor Payton prefers streets and cities," said Delegana almost playfully. "Bascombe, my greatest earthly treasure, has no charms for him."

That evening Jim drove his employer to a Lodge meeting of the Rising Moon, held in a private house near Slough, and was somewhat surprised when he was invited to attend.

"But I have only recently received the first degree, sir," he protested. "Surely they'll be going higher than that."

"They will," returned Delegana "and you will go with them, my Jaime."

So, since the Honoured President was supreme in all things, and the Master of a private Lodge could not, by rule, oppose any order given by a "King," the members of the "Good Karma" Lodge, Slough, witnessed the amazing spectacle of an Entered Beginner receiving the second, third, and fourth degrees of the Order of the Rising Moon at one sitting.

Warned by the conversation he had heard that morning, Jim went through his initiation as one in a trance, making very few mistakes, and, when the ritual positions allowed, keeping his eyes fixed on the hooded, gray-robed figure of Delegana.

During the "refreshment" which followed the Lodge meeting, there was little general conversation, for the working of occult degrees is exhausting, and "Good Karma" seldom, if ever, raised their Lodge more than once during a sitting.

"Weaklings!" sneered Delegana, when they were once more on the road to London. "They work four degrees, and the virtue has gone out of them! Yet you, my Jaime, came through what must have been a trying experience, and show no sign of strain."

"Why should I, sir?" asked Jim. "I thought it all frightfully interesting—seems to get more so every step up, but I can't understand its making anybody tired."

"You are a man after my own heart," said Delegana. "I have long waited for such as you. Look, I want you to do something for me, something quite outside your ordinary duties—are you willing?"

"Of course, sir, anything you ask."

"Then, for my sake, befriend a member who has recently returned to the Silver Lotus after a prolonged absence. One who, I think, was driven away by petty jealousy, or some other antagonistic influence. He is a Jew, wise, as are all his race, in occult mysteries, and one whom I should like to see go far. Ask him to your house, Jaime, introduce him to your charming wife, do all you can to welcome him back to us as a brother should."

"Of course, sir," returned Jim, thanking all the gods of "hush" for the heaven-sent chance to open liaison with Topsy.

"His name is Joseph Lewis," went on Delegana, "and when I have raised you to the sixth degree you and he can continue your upward path together, for, from the sixth Moon degree, those who are proved worthy may begin their novitiate in the 'Kings'."

Once again, Jim was "talled" back to No. 11 that night, though it was Scotland Yard which was responsible instead of Payton. Deeming it wiser not to antagonise the police more than necessary, he refrained from giving the "tail" a run round the houses, but once on his own doorstep, it took all his self-control to prevent himself from turning round to blow a good-night kiss to the man who gazed fixedly at No. 11 as he sauntered along the road, slowing perceptibly as he passed the house in which he knew the suspect to be lodging.

THE three days which elapsed between Inspector Parsonage's visit to Elm Park Gardens and the Somerset week-end passed uneventfully for Jim.

The police still kept a plainclothes man "on" Delegana's house, but he was an expert sleuth, and, beyond causing "Weekly" Reynolds a good deal of contemptuous amusement, might just as well have stayed away.

Payton, having instructed an inwardly convulsed Jim in the art of unobserved exit from the house, came and went at will, and only the watcher from Craddock's Own noted his movements.

Since that one attempt at hypnotism, Delegana had not again indulged in what Jim termed any "funny business," but devoted himself to preparing the Beloved for his first public appearance, now only a fortnight away. With that capacity for discovering gifts in other men which was partly the secret of his power, he soon found out Jim's flair for teaching, and entrusted to him the task of putting a polish on Pablo Alvarez's English.

"Between the Irishman and the Spaniard there has even been a bond of sympathy," he said. "The Celtic music in your voice, Jaime, attunes your words to the Beloved's ear. From you, he will learn that harmony of diction so essential to the delivery of his Message."

So Jim, mentally casting back to his early boyhood, set to work at grafting a Southern Irish intonation on to the lifting inflexion with which a Spaniard speaks English. Imitative as a parrot, the inspired Child was soon running merrily up and down the scale in a very fair reproduction of a Cork accent.

Of the boy himself, Jim thought, the only points about him which deserved the terms "beloved" or "inspired" were his looks. These alone might have been a gift from gods, who decreed that, of the known world, only Atlantis, now represented by the Canary Islands, should survive the flood.

Tall, as those Atlantians must have been if judged by the doorways of the age-old cave-dwellings, or the length of the sleeping-places cut out of living rock, with hair of burnished gold, regular features, and a beautifully proportioned body, Pablo Alvarez would have attracted attention among his fellows in any portion of the globe.

But there his claim to distinction ended. Mentally, he differed not at all from his elder brother who drove a motor bus between Las Palmas town and the hill villages of the interior. He was the same mixture of cunning and simplicity, child-like enthusiasms and adult knowledge, as any young Latin of his age and class.

In the course of the lessons, Jim learned, little by little, something of the financial embarrassment which had led the elder Alvarez to effect what was practically the sale of one of his too-numerous offspring; learned, too, that life in London was proving very disappointing to the young Spaniard. Life in this quiet house held none of the gay pictures conjured up by the magic word "London," and never had there been a more unwilling prophet.

What Jim did not learn was that, behind the expressionless eyes fixed on him with a student's concentration, an active brain was busy with plans of escape, in which the "red senior," as the servants had named him, was to play no inconsiderable part.

EARLY on Saturday morning, Jim brought the saloon round to the house, in readiness for the journey to Somerset. Delegana's last-minute instructions to Payton as to Pablo's routine during his absence were minute and explicit, but something in the secretary's expression made Jim hope that the boy's week-end would be more normal than that mapped out for him by his protector.

Payton, he felt, would not be too faithful a deputy.

Two guests were to accompany Delegana to Bascombe Manor, one being Owen Sinclair, Master of Silver Lotus, the other, much to Jim's secret delight, "Joseph Lewis," otherwise "Topsy" of Craddock's Own.

They called for Sinclair at his flat in Lancaster Gate, but Goldsmid was waiting for them outside Gunnersbury station, looking, in his elderly overcoat and black velvet hat, more Hebraic than Jim had ever seen him.

The Master of Silver Lotus was patiently taken aback at the sight of this unorthodox member of his own Lodge, but Delegana was specially gracious to the Jew, greeting him in a language Jim did not understand, but which he recognised as that generally known as "Yiddish."

It was a cold, grey morning with more than a hint of fog lying over such fields as the increasing march of bungalowism has permitted to remain within sight of the Bath road, and in Maidenhead sections of the veil clinging into the river became detached and floated raggedly across the car's bonnet.

In the thickest, leafless branches dripped moisture, and a still, penetrating chill forced its way even into the warm saloon. On the perfect stretch of road beyond Read-

ing, Jim experienced a wave of longing for an open car. He would have given much to have been at the wheel of a sports model, feeling the icy bite of swift progress through the wintry air.

Over the Berkshire country, so opulent in summer, now dead and colorless on this January forenoon, the mists drew nearer, making the atmosphere of the closed car seem heavier than before, and Jim cast an upward glance at the fastenings of the sunshine roof.

Delegana, noticing the movement, laughed softly.

"I believe if you were alone, you would have the roof pushed back, Jaime!"

"Right again, sir! I was just thinking what a marvellous road this is in a sports car—something snappy—"

"And open, I suppose."

"Definitely."

Simultaneous exclamations of horror burst from Sinclair and Goldsmid, but Delegana only laughed once more.

They passed through Savernake Forest, the giant trees looming ghostly through the mist, and halted for lunch at Marlborough. There, for a few moments, Jim and his fellow "hush" man were alone together, Delegana having given orders for the petrol tank to be filled to capacity.

"Apparently this Bascombe place is completely off the map," he said, a watchful eye on the glass indicator of the petrol pump. "One can't even buy juice within five miles of it."

"I know," returned Goldsmid. "I was down there once having a look-see while J.D. was away. It was empty for years before he bought it, and the psychic research people used to go and spend nights ghost-hunting there till the local authorities put a stop to it."

"Why?"

"Because, of the last pair who stayed a night there, one was found dead next morning, and the other quite insane."

"Sounds a cheerful spot," was Jim's comment. "We look like having a pleasant week-end! I say, Delegana is far more Comparative Thoughtful than usual, isn't he?"

"That's for the benefit of Sinclair and me. He has to keep up the post before us. He's not even genuine in his occultism, that man; he's acting just as hard as you and I are."

"I humbled to that before I'd been with him three days. He's got some pretty foul object in view, has our J.D., and if we're not belly careful it will be a case of 'cross marks spot' where the bodies were discovered, for us both, my lad!"

He paid for the petrol, and Goldsmid, following him into the hotel, noted how the boredom passed from Delegana's face at the sight of his driver.

The fog cleared a little as they crossed the edge of Salisbury Plain, but thickened when they dropped to lower ground, increasing in density after they passed through Chippenham, till, at the foot of Box Hill, visibility was so far decreased that Jim was obliged to drive with the windscreen open.

"We'll have to invest in one of those de-frosters, sir," he said to Delegana. "Ordinary wipers are no use for this sort of thing—the bally fog is freezing as soon as it touches the glass."

They went through Bath at a walking-pace, and when they swung left off the Bristol road, to begin their ascent to the Mendips, Jim stopped the car and got out to take his bearings.

"It looks like history repeating itself, sir. I've been lost in a fog 'up to Priddy' before this."

"I will change seats with Lewis," said Delegana. "Then I can be your eyes, Jaime."

The change-over was effected in the deadening, eerie silence fog alone can produce, and they moved on once more.

"Do you, then, know this part of the world, Jaime?"

"I do. I fairly lived on the Bath road at one time. Reynolds' have a branch garage in Bristol, and I was forever bringing cars down here, to say nothing of working for three months in the garage itself."

"This young man," said Delegana over his shoulder, "is a marvel. He knows all the things I want him to know, and is ignorant of those which I wish him not to know. Easy here, Jaime, we are coming to a sharp corner."

Delegana had not exaggerated when he said he would be Jim's "eyes," for his pilotage through that white curtain was little short of miraculous. Without peering ahead, or exhibiting any signs of unusual strain, he gave his quiet instructions, and never did he make a mistake, miss one of the many side-turnings, or let Jim pass the end of any of the small intersecting roads by which they came, finally, to Bascombe Manor.

"By Jove, sir, that was marvellous!" said Jim admiringly, as they drove up the short avenue, and pulled to a standstill before a house, the lower portion of which alone was visible. "I can't think how you did it."

"Merely a question of orientation, Jaime, and I could not have brought you here in safety had I not had a driver who obeyed my commands implicitly and without hesitation."

"I trusted you, sir," said Jim simply. "Shall I get out and call someone?"

"Matteo and Garcia, who left London by train early this morning, should be here to meet us," said Delegana irritably. "I do not appreciate the door of my house being closed against me. Knock loudly, Jaime."

Obediently, Jim stepped out into the silence. A ponderous iron knocker, beautifully wrought in the shape of a mermaid, hung on the thick, nail-studded door, and, lifting this, Jim beat a tattoo fit to raise the dead.

After an appreciable pause, hurried footsteps were heard within, and a pleasant-faced countrywoman opened to them, her dark hair, dewed with moisture, bearing witness to the cause of her delay in admitting them.

"Why! It never be the Master, surely!" she cried, in the soft West-country accent which always made Jim think of Ireland. "Noakes and me did think you were delayed by the fog, but I lit a good fire in case so be you come after all. You must forgive me keeping you waiting, sir, but I was up to the chickens, shutting 'em in for fear of they dratted badgers."

"No need to ask forgiveness, Mrs. Noakes," Delegana, stepping out of the car, was feebly gracious. "It was the duty of Matteo and Garcia to attend to the door."

"But they're not here, sir! That's why we thought you wasn't coming."

"Not here! The fools must have missed their way. Come in, Sinclair. Come in, Lewis—welcome to my poor country home. Mrs. Noakes, this is Mr. Hogan, who is going to care for me and my cars from this out."

Ask Noakes to show him the way to the garage and then bring him to join us in the Judgment Room. Not so alarming as it sounds," he added to his guests. "Merely an echo of history."

Still talking, he led the way into the house, Sinclair and Goldsmid following in his wake. "There now!" remarked Mrs. Noakes to Jim. "I'm right pleased to hear Master has a gentleman companion at last. He shouldn't be alone in this house without nothing but they foreigners at night, after Noakes and me has gone home. We live in the lodge, Mr. Hogan. Here be Noakes, he'll show you where to put the motor."

A man who, at first sight, gave the impression of having three moustaches, so luxuriant were his eyebrows, loomed out of the mist, and helped Jim to remove the suitcases from the car. Then he guided him round the house to a yard, where a new, modern garage stood in readiness for the saloon. He spoke little, but eyed Jim closely from beneath those twin fringes. Evidently his wife was the talkative partner.

THEA, set in the Judgment Room—so called, Delegana explained, from the fact that Judge Jeffries had once held an informal court therein during the penal days following the Monmouth Insurrection—was certainly no meagre meal. Mrs. Noakes seemed to have provided every variety of bread, cream, and jam in a spread which would have delighted the heart of the hungriest schoolboy. Yet only Jim did justice to the fare, his employer watching him with the kindly toleration of one who observes a pet animal satisfactorily eager for its food.

The room in which they sat was utterly devoid of the Sybaritic so evident in Elm Park Gardens, and Jim had to admit that Delegana had a sense of fitness. Those rough stone walls, the flagged floor, the leaden casements set in deep embrasures, would have cried out against the glitter of imported Spain, and that sunshine-yellow wash was the only color possible in a room from which, at four o'clock of a January afternoon, daylight was already fading.

"You are admiring my room, Jaime?"

"I am, sir. It is all so wonderfully in keeping."

"Yet there are people who find this house primitive. Electricity has not yet reached Bascombe, and only recently, at vast cost in money and patience, was I able to persuade the post-office to install the telephone. Ah, here is Mrs. Noakes with the lamp! I was just telling my friends, Mrs. Noakes, that they must not expect too much from our Mendip fastness."

"Maybe it ain't so good as Lunnon, sir," said the woman, "but I hopes I can make you comfortable like."

She lit the lamps, beamed affably upon the company, and withdrew.

"I suppose that woman and her husband are in the Glastonbury Lodge?" said Sinclair. "Initiates under instruction, perhaps?"

"No. The Noakeses are young egos, as yet far down the Path. They will not begin to build their Karma yet awhile, and are meantime ordained by the Masters to serve more complete entities."

"But surely," persisted the Master of Silver Lotus, accustomed to laying down the law to junior members, "that being so, they should now enter their period of preliminary instruction?"

There was an almost imperceptible hardening in Delegana's voice.

"What does one life-period count in the concentric whole, my dear Sinclair? One small cog in the slow-turning wheel of eternity. Some egos need forcing, some must be held back till nature has prepared the ground in which we may plant the seed. Come, Jaime, take this low seat. I want you near me."

He indicated a carved stool, cushioned in old brocade, and Jim, fetching it, placed it by Delegana's chair and sat down, leaning back against the carved arm.

Watching him, Goldsmid felt an unusual glow of loyalty towards Craddock's Own. A corps which could train such a flawless worker was worth the hard and often uncongenial service demanded from its members. Jim's actions were so natural that it was almost impossible, even for his fellow-agent, to realise he was playing a part so fully did he give the impression of complete confidence in, and real affection for, his strange employer.

Yet, old hand and all as he was in the "hush" game, Goldsmid experienced a mixed feeling of disgust and fear when Delegana's hand touched Jim's cheek for an instant, before coming to rest on his shoulder.

The Jew held no illusions about the President of Comparative Thought. However genuinely fond he might become of Jim, he would have no hesitation in turning on him if he were to put even an unconscious spoke in the wheel of the mystery man's ambition.

Again, as on that evening in Elm Park Gardens, Delegana now exerted himself to entertain his guests, and his talk, though it turned more to occult subjects than on the previous occasion, was equally brilliant.

Sitting silent as befitted one who had but recently been admitted to the outer fringe of Comparative mysticism, Jim soon realised that, of the three men, Sinclair had far the least brains. Most of the arguments he put forward were unoriginal, patently culled from books, and soon Delegana and Goldsmid began to ignore his platitudinous contributions, and kept the conversation more and more between themselves.

Though the actual subjects under discussion made Jim feel rather as though he were witnessing some decadent and unbalanced exhibition, he had to admit they were interesting, and he was glad to see that Topsy was making a good impression on his host.

Presently Delegana broke off the conversation, his fingers tightening on Jim's shoulder.

"What is troubling you, Jaime mio? I can feel an uneasy vibration beneath my hand."

"Those two Spaniards, sir. The fog must be pretty bad now the daylight has gone, and they may be ditched somewhere."

"Let them be! When I give an order, I expect it to be carried out, no matter what the weather conditions."

"How were they to get here, sir? From the train, I mean?"

"By hired car. Cupples, of Langford, was to meet them in Bristol. They were due to arrive at Temple Meads station before midday."

"Midday? And it's now nearly six. Something must have happened to them, sir."

Delegana smiled tolerantly. "You concern yourself overmuch with the fate of servants, Jaime."

"Well, I'm a servant myself," Jim said, "and those men should have been here long ago. May I ring up and find out if they were fetched from Bristol, sir?"

"As you like."

Delegana took his hand from Jim's shoulder and leaned back in his chair. He was completely indifferent as to the whereabouts of his messengers.

"The dynamic force of youth," he remarked, as Jim's footsteps died away across the hall. "Association with Jaime might be compared to a course of mental vibromassage. His unalloyed energy has a revitalising effect on those who, like myself, find prolonged leadership a strain."

Sinclair gave vent to something very like a snort. It was obvious he did not share his senior officer's devotion to Jim. "A somewhat crude, unfinished entity—" he began, but Delegana cut him short.

"Thank you, Sinclair. You have given me the very pointer I needed in explanation of the reason why there is stagnation in certain of the English Lodges. If the officers lack perception, how can they guide the members?"

There was a merciless gleam in his eyes, and Goldsmid thanked heaven he was not in Sinclair's shoes.

At that moment the subject of the discussion came back to the Judgment Room.

"Just as I thought, sir," he announced. "Garcia and Matteo were met all right, but at the top of Burrington Combe the driver refused to take them any farther. Visibility was almost nil, and he wouldn't risk crashing the car. He wanted them to go back with him and wait in Langford till it cleared a bit, but they insisted on trying to get here on foot. It was the driver who spoke to me, and he said he let them down at two past, sir."

"Fool and weakling!" snarled Delegana. "I hope you told him so, Jaime."

"No, sir, I did not. I should have done the same myself. He had his employer's car to think about."

"Ah, well, each man to his trade, I suppose. But Garcia and Matteo will arrive all right. They spent the week before my return to England here in Bascombe, and Mrs. Noakes told me they were forever out exploring the neighborhood."

"All the same," persisted Jim, "it's one thing to know a country by day, and quite another to find your way about it in a thick fog—and the Mendip Heights aren't easy to know."

"They have tongues in their heads."

"But only Matteo can speak English, and not too well either. I doubt if he could understand directions given in a Somerset accent. If you don't mind sir, I think I'll go and look for them now."

"Having just told me that you agreed with Cupples' driver in not risking his car?"

"Oh, I'll not take the car, sir. I've already fixed up with Noakes to lend me a bicycle. Anyone panting to come with me?"

He worded the question in a way which gave Goldsmid the cue to refuse the invitation.

"Not me," he said. "I'm not as Spartan as you are, Hogan. Unless, of course, Mr. Delegana wishes me to go—"

"Not in the least," Delegana assured him. "And if I did not credit Jaime with greater bodily hardihood than the rest of us, I should forbid his going out to-night. We shall expect you back when we see you, Jaime."

"Probably before that," returned Jaime cheerfully. "So long, everyone!"

He was not sorry to escape for a while from the over-occult atmosphere of Bascombe Manor, and, knowing Goldsmid to be at his post, felt he could desert with a free heart. Also, the plight of the two Spaniards really troubled him. They were, he knew, natives of Grand Canary, and as this was their first visit to England, would have little experience of fog. The Mendip country around Bascombe abounded in pitfalls for the unwary, and the old mine-workings were a danger at night even to those who knew the locality.

Making his way to the back door, he was rather surprised to find Noakes awaiting him, holding two bicycles.

"Yes, sir—I be coming w' 'ee. I b'aint going for to see no man out alone a night the like of this 'un. It be thick up to Priddy."

He mounted his bicycle and relapsed into a silence which Jim did not attempt to break. He knew enough of Mendip folk not to try forcing a conversation.

For some time they rode without speaking, halting at intervals to listen for the sound of footsteps or voices. It was eerie standing on those lonely roads, their lamps making a faint blur on the white screen before them, the silence broken by the bleat of wandering sheep or the sound of fog-horns coming from the distant Bristol Channel.

"They be lost proper," volunteered Noakes at last. "Maybe they've took the Cheddar road."

"Or gone half-way to Wells, confound 'em," said Jim. "Yet somehow I think the poor devils are still trying to make their way to Bascombe. That driver said they seemed set on getting there, however they did it."

"As I opinion they was in a taking fear Master'd create if they wasn't waiting for he."

Jim smiled. The picture of Delegana "creating" tickled him, though he knew his employer's quiet, bitter anger could be far more deadly than the explosive wrath of a normal man.

"But he couldn't be angry with the fellows for losing their way. I bet they didn't do it on purpose."

"No, sir—but Master be ain't whole English, and you can't never fathom they foreigners. Take this, sir. It's three years gone Martinus since he bought Bascombe, and he hasn't been above seven weeks living here all told. Now there's some Bascombes—the old family as used to own the Manor—come home with money, seeming, and want to get the old place back, but will Master sell? Not he! Made him more set on keeping it for himself. That's foreign. He'd no love for Somerset—he all one to him where he'd hide—but there he sticks, while Bascombes takes a house to Axbridge, and says there they sits till it happens."

"What happens?"

"Something that do happen when those stay in the Manor that is not they the Manor ordains. Maybe 'tis rumor, sir, but folks do say the house is haunted. No one won't go nigh it, nor even pass the gate after dark unless they have company, and though Bessie and me, we ain't never seen nothing, but us don't stay after she's laid Master's supper, and always clears out afore dark if so be we're here alone. You haven't no call to be feared, Mr. Hogan," he added hastily. "Nothing won't harm you."

"I'm not in the least nervous," Jim assured him. "Anyone employed by Mr. Delegana soon gets hardened to queer happenings. I just take things as they come, Noakes."

"My word, but you're right. I says to Bessie the moment you puts foot in the house, 'That be a sensible young gentleman. I surmise there'll be no rushing up to Wells for chemist's stuff to calm be down.' And Bessie she agrees w' I."

"Listen! Do you hear voices?"

"Maybe my ears ain't so young as your'n, sir."

"There it is again! What's up this turning?"

"'Tis only a rough track leading to the old mines eventually."

Cautiously, pushing their bicycles over the uneven ground, they groped their way for about fifty yards, till a more distinct sound penetrated the deadening curtain.

"That be they, surely," offered Noakes, speaking, for some unknown reason, in a hoarse whisper. "Whatever be that row? Sounds as if they were casting spells."

"Praying, I should imagine," said Jim, wishing he could take this bluff ex-Serviceman into his confidence. "I know that tone of voice. Hi! Matteo! Garcia! Where are you?"

"Ere, senor—we come quick—"

"Not too quick," advised Jim. "Or you may take a loss. We'll wait for you."

Out of the mist came high, excited voices.

"I told you, Matteo, that if I called upon Saint Christopher, who protects travellers, he would hear me and send aid."

"No, no! It was my prayer to Santa Decrota—the women will do anything for me."

"Hut, fool! If he should learn that we prayed—"

"Anda! The red senor has no Spanish."

But the "red senor" learned a good deal during that long, damp walk back to Bascombe Manor.

Listening to the almost continuous chatter between the Spaniards, he heard, among other interesting new items, that they had explored the possibilities of taking a ship from Bristol and sailing for Las Palmas, Spain, South America—anywhere which would put a stretch of sea between them and the master they both feared and hated. But they had been deterred by lack of money, the farseeing Payton having taken their tickets himself, and ordered the car-hire to be added to the account which Delegana ran with Cupples' garage. Also, Matteo, who had been longer in Delegana's service than his companion, held the unshaken belief that even were they to fly to the ends of the earth they would not escape the vengeance of "that cursed yellow-eyed devil."

Comments highly complimentary to himself were passed on the kindness of the "red senor" in coming to search for them, coupled with the pessimistic forecast—expressed by Matteo—that such unusual consideration would not last long within the sphere of Delegana's influence.

"It is like living with the devil himself," said Matteo finally.

"But you and I are free men," persisted Garcia. "There must be some way of escape!"

"Only by death," was the dreary reply, and Jim felt it was time he did something to lighten the gloom.

"You will be glad to have supper when you get back," he said, speaking very slowly,

and rounding off each word that it might be easier to understand.

"Yes, sir," replied Matteo. "We like to eat, but we fear . . ."

"Fear what?" prompted Jim.

"The Senor Delegana. If he makes angry, we shall not eat."

"Rats! I'll ate you get some."

Despite poor visibility, Jim saw the shrug with which Matteo greeted this remark. It was an eloquent movement, expressing his opinion that the "red senor" was being over-optimistic.

At the back door Noakes too charge of both bicycles, but did not attempt to enter the house.

"Good-night, sir," he said. "I'll see 'ee in the morning."

"Good-night," returned Jim, "and thank you for coming with me."

The man was just about to turn away, when he called to Jim.

"Mr. Hogan!"

"Hullo?"

"If it weren't for the missus, I'd stay with you for a spell. I don't rightly like leaving you alone with all they foreigners."

"Nonsense! And they're not all foreigners, you know. Even if Mr. Delegana isn't wholly English, Mr. Sinclair and Mr. Lewis are here, too."

"Huh! A blessed wash-out and a Jew."

Noakes was all ex-soldier at that moment. "Lot of use they'd be if anything was to happen. Not that I suppose nothing won't happen . . ."

Then, no doubt feeling he had said too much, he wheeled the bicycle about and disappeared into the fog.

Jim found the two Spaniards huddled miserably over the kitchen fire, making no attempt to prepare themselves any food.

"Come, now," he said cheerfully. "Food is what you boys need. Look, Mrs. Noakes knows your tastes—eggs, olive oil, onions, all left ready for you. Come on, now, which of you can cook?"

"Do you consider, Jaime, that they deserve a feast?" Delegana's voice came with startling suddenness from the doorway.

As so often before, Jim had to make a rapid choice between cringing to his employer or standing up to Delegana as a man. Trusting to luck, he took the latter course. "Undoubtedly, sir. Mighty stout effort on their part, charging off into the fog like that, just because they knew you wanted them here. With no real knowledge of the way, too, and Matteo the only linguist. Not that I congratulate him on his English, and, by Jove, his French isn't much better! My supper? Oh, that's all right, sir. I'll be along as soon as I've seen these blokes started on theirs. They're chilled to the bone, and we don't want them both down with pneumonia, do we?"

Delegana smiled, a queer, enigmatical smile, quite devoid of amusement.

"You are setting me an example of brotherly love, eh, Jaime? So be it; you shall have your way, and play nursemaid to these incompetents who lose themselves in a civilised country. You will find us in the dining-room when you have finished your ministrations." Then, addressing the servants in their own language: "The Senor has pleaded for you, and I am granting his plea—this time. But not again, you understand?"

"Si, senor."

"Then do not forget."

With that he left them, and the Spaniards waited till the groan of the swing balze door in the kitchen passage told that he had entered his own part of the house.

Then Matteo cursed Delegana with point and fluency, while Garcia fell on his knees, and, seizing Jim's hand, kissed it fervently, imploring a variety of lesser-known saints to bless and protect this defender of the poor and oppressed.

Tethered to the spot by Garcia's firm grip, Jim felt extraordinarily foolish. At length, having assisted in the cooking, and seen the two men seated at their meal, he left the kitchen and joined the rest of the party in the dining-room. Supper was nearly over, but the others waited patiently while he ate, though conversation languished—frozen, no doubt, by the chill of the room, which even a blazing log-fire did little to dispel.

After supper they returned to the Judgment Room, where Delegana, once more seated with Jim at his feet, allowed the spite which he had not been able to vent on his servants to find a new victim. Deliberately he began to bait Owen Sinclair. Everything that unfortunate man said was held up to ridicule, each statement stripped of its carefully acquired culture, to expose the second-class brain from which it emanated.

At last, tiring of his game, Delegana rose from his chair, stretched himself like the great cat he resembled.

"Come, my friends, it is time we sought that liberation which men call sleep, hoping that the Masters may see fit to guide our freed astrals on the path of wisdom. Lewis, you will see Sinclair safely to his room, lest his feet stumble on the way." He cast a contemptuous glance at the Master of Silver Lotus, writhing in his mental nakedness. "Come to my room, Jaime, in—let us say twenty minutes. I want to talk with you alone."

Both Intelligence men rose to their feet and remained standing till Delegana had left the room, but Sinclair stayed in his chair, staring glassily before him. It was Jim's first indication that the man had been drinking.

"That's the worst of these habitual teetotalers," muttered Goldmund. "He drank a good bit at supper, and I had an idea it would take delayed action. Lend us a hand, Jim—J.D. was right about 'unsteady footsteps'!"

When Jim entered Delegana's bedroom after the prescribed twenty minutes he found him already in his pyjamas, the thin purple silk showing clearly how wasted was his tall, well-made body.

Posing, as always, Delegana did not speak to Jim for quite three minutes after he entered the room, but seated himself by the fire, leaving Jim still standing just inside the door.

Then he turned and looked at him with an expression which made Jim feel desperately uncomfortable.

"Come to the warmth, Chiquito," he purred. "Smoke?"

He held out his case, offering one of the specially manufactured cigarettes which the "hush" man had distrusted on sight.

"Would you mind frightfully if I smoked my own, sir? I know it's a low taste, but I do so, prefer them."

"Of course! Gold Flake are your fancy, I think. You will find a tin on the table yonder. I told Matteo to keep you supplied."

Jim lit up, bending longer over the match than was necessary. Being Delegana's little pet lamb, he reflected, seemed to promise a certain amount of material gain.

Leaning back in a deep arm-chair by the fire, he studied the room where Delegana

slept, and decided it was the only one he had so far seen which was thoroughly out of keeping with the rest of Bascombe Manor. Carpeted in thick purple pile, the wide divan bed heaped with pillows covered in silk of the same shade, the mullioned windows hidden by purple curtains patterned with interlaced triangles worked in gleaming silver thread, it gave the effect of sombre, carefully planned luxury.

He devoutly hoped he would not have to stay in it long, for the atmosphere was heavy with the fumes of a scented pastille amouldering in the brazier always to be found in rooms frequented by devotees of Comparative Thought.

He was thankful, therefore, when, after a few desultory remarks, Delegana confessed to weariness, and, after suggesting that Jim should devote the following morning to the entertainment of Lewis, dismissed him for the night.

"Just one thing more, Jaime," he said, "before you go. What did you think of our noble Master of Silver Lotus, high initiate of the Rising Moon, to-night? Speak frankly."

"Well, sir—I was rather surprised. In fact, I wondered what made the Brethren of Silver Lotus elect him to such high office." "Si el cielo no leus al mercado, no se vendiera lo malo!" quoted Delegana. "Some day I will tell you what that means, Jaime. Sleep well, Chiquito—good Karma!"

Once in his small, Spartan bedroom, in a distant wing of the old house, Jim flung open the window to admit the cold night air. Fog-laden though it might be, it was, at least, clean. Elbows on the damp sill, he sat for some time gazing into the blank before him, shaken by a hatred he had never before felt for another human being. He knew how that Delegana's baiting of the unfortunate Sinclair had been no mere whim, but the outward and visible sign of the contempt he felt for the mystic faith of which he himself was high priest.

The rituals, the long and rigorous bodily preparation undergone by candidates for the higher degrees, the rites which he himself had devised, even the whole of Comparative Thought itself, had been dismissed by its President in the one word "rubbish." Jim did not need to wait for the problematic "some day" when Delegana should translate for him the Spanish proverb: "If fools did not go to market, rubbish would never be sold."

JIM woke next morning to the well-known sounds of country life. His room was in the wing nearest the farmyard, and through the open window he could hear the familiar clang of pails, an occasional low from the cow-byre, and the vocal delight of the newly-released poultry which Mrs. Noakes reared in order to send eggs to London for her master's use. Comparative Thought allowed its vegetarian members to consume eggs in vast quantities.

From his bed he could see that the overnight mist had vanished as if by magic, and a peep from the window showed the countryside bathed in clear wintry sunshine. Certainly Bascombe Manor made up for a somewhat isolator position by the beauty of the views it afforded.

From his window Jim could look over the uplands to those "dark Salanic hills" to the softer, bracken-crowned slopes of the foothills, rolling gently down to the rich lanes at their base, and beyond that, the coppery line of the sea.

To Jim, homesick for the clear blues and greens of the waters around his native

coasts, the muddy color of the sea in the Bristol Channel and vicinity was always a matter of regret. The mud of Weston-super-Mare might be beneficial to health, but he longed for the purer waters of a rocky coast.

Having nerved himself to the rigors of a cold bath (the tap marked "hot" was a shade more chilly than the official "cold"), he proceeded downstairs, fully determined to curb his matutinal cheerfulness as much as possible. He had a feeling that neither Delegana nor his guests would be at their best at breakfast.

He need not have troubled, for, though Garcia and Matteo could be seen assiduously tidying the Judgment Room, and a shy young woman rose from her knees to allow him to step round her scrubbing-bucket in the hall, there was, as yet, no sign of the other occupants of the house. The dining-room, cold and empty, did not look as though it expected breakfasters.

In the kitchen Mrs. Noakes raised astonished hands at the sight of Jim.

"Why, Mr. Hogan! I never thought to see any of the gentlemen out of his bed afore midday earliest! I've been here ever since Master came to Bascombe, and you be the first ever was ready for his breakfast. I'll not be a time getting the table set in the dining-room, sir." She came across the kitchen and peered closely into his face. "And I'd be surprised," she added, "if you didn't have a rare good night's sleep, too!"

"Why shouldn't I?" asked Jim. "I'm not a toonsee, you know, to be kept awake by the silence of a country night. I say, must I feed in solitary state in the dining-room? Would I be in your way if I took my breakfast in here?"

"Not if so be you wouldn't mind, Mr. Hogan, and it's a sight warmer, too. That dining-room, he takes a long time to heat up, and the fire ain't been lighted long."

Noakes, coming in a little while later with vegetables for the Sunday dinner, paused, astonished, in the doorway. Catching her husband's eye, the woman nodded, as though the picture of Jim making a hearty breakfast, last night's "Western Evening News" propped up against the marble, was equally surprising to her.

"Morning, Noakes," said Jim, looking over the top of the paper. "I say, what's up? Is it so unusual for anyone to be conscious at eight-thirty on a fine morning?"

Noakes pulled at his long moustache.

"Well, sir, it be this way: Most of master's friends be the same as he, they don't ordain to rise in the morning like ordinary folk."

"But I'm not a friend," said Jim; "at least, not within the meaning of the Act. I'm paid—and paid well, too—for driving his cars and being on hand whenever he wants me. As for staying in bed—who could on a decent day like this? How are our lost sheep this morning?"

"Same as always." It was Mrs. Noakes who replied, "Creeping about in they roped-soled shoes like a pair o' ghosts—" She broke off at the word, and looked again at Jim. "Did you tell me you didn't hear no noises in the night, Mr. Hogan?"

"I did not say so, Mrs. Noakes, but if I did I'd only have been telling the truth. I certainly remember getting into bed, but after that, whole battalions might have been drilling in the passage for all I knew about it. I go to bed to sleep, you know, not to listen to the wind whistling round the house."

The Noakeses exchanged glances, then

turned upon him an interested and rather incredulous gaze.

With an effort Jim shook off the feeling that he must have turned into one of the rarer animals in the Zoo.

"Look here, I see you are both longing to know if I heard or saw any spoofs, apparitions, ghosts, or whatnots last night. Why not ask me right out?"

There was a short, embarrassed pause. Then Mrs. Noakes said:

"There's some do hold it unlucky to speak o' they things, Mr. Hogan; brings 'em to 'e, seemingly, and Master he don't hold with us asking questions."

"I see. Well, Mrs. Noakes, I promise you if I come across a knight in armor or a lady with her head tucked underneath her arm, as the song says, I'll tell you without being asked. I expect I'm too ordinary a person to be worth haunting. Well, that's me away now to dig out Mr. Lewis and make him come for a walk for the good of his liver."

He made a more bolsterous exit than Bascombe Kitchen had seen for many a day, and the Noakeses heard him whistling as he bounded up the stairs.

"Ordinary!" exclaimed Noakes (he pronounced the word "ordinary"). "Extraordinary, if you ask me! Have you heard anyone else claim to have slept natural in the Manor first night they was here, Bessie?"

His wife shook her head.

"And he was telling the truth," she said. "He don't impress I as a liar."

GOLDSMID, roused from an uneasy slumber, gave a sarcastic snarl when Jim asked if he had had a good night.

"As good as yours, I expect."

"Then you were lucky," said Jim. "I went off about two minutes after I got to bed, and didn't wake till eight this morning. However, I gather you didn't do the same. Keep the grisly revelations till later, old son, and come out in the open. It's a topping morning."

Muttering something about its needing to be, Goldsmid tumbled out of bed, but Jim noticed that he skimmed his ablutions, and that the hand which wielded his razor was far from steady.

He shudderingly declined Mrs. Noakes' offer of breakfast, partaking only of a cup of black coffee, which he gulped down as though grudging each extra moment spent under the roof of Bascombe Manor.

He found Jim waiting for him outside, leaning over a gate, in rapt contemplation of the Red Devons, which were Noakes' pride and joy.

"Wonderful milkers, those," he said, as Goldsmid came to his side. "Of course, this pasture is pretty good."

"Good Lord!" burst out Goldsmid. "If you dragged me from my bed to listen to a lecture on cows—"

"All right, all right!" soothed Jim, unruffled. "Come on, Topsy, let's get clear of the house, somewhere out of our dear President's range, anyway. Not that he objects to our being together; far from it. At the moment I'm carrying out his instructions by being nice to you."

"Nice!" groaned Goldsmid. "If dragging me over these blasted moors is your idea of being nice—"

"Poor old Topsy—though, I suppose, we ought to 'Joe' and 'Jim' each other now, seeing as 'ow we're on duty."

"I'll call you Jim all right, but for any sakes don't dare to give me 'Joe'! It's a name I hate."

"All right, you temperamental son of Israel! One last effort, Topsy, and you'll be sitting on top of the world."

On the summit of one of those round hillocks which abound on the Mendip uplands Jim stopped and spread his mackintosh on the ground.

"Sit there and pant. It's as warm here as if it were Spring. You're out of condition, Topsy."

"Had too many sedentary jobs lately," was the breathless reply, "and a disturbed night hasn't improved matters."

"What is all this about disturbed nights?" demanded Jim. "The Noakeses have been rubbing it in that 'All sleep abandon ye who enter here' ought to be written up over the Manor door, and now you are harping on the same string."

"Do you mean to say you never heard anything strange last night, Jim?"

"Not a thing. I wasn't awake to hear."

"And you really slept all through it?"

"Haven't I been telling you so? What was it, anyway?"

"The most ghastly set of noises it has ever been my lot to listen to," was the serious reply, "and if I hadn't been too scared to leave my room I'd have come along to yours for company. Honestly, Jim, it was horrible! My room is quite close to J.D.'s, you know, and the last normal thing I heard was you closing his door; and then you went past my door, going, I suppose, to your own room. Then things began to happen."

"What kind of things?" The scepticism had gone from Jim's voice. Goldsmid, he knew, was no alarmist, nor was he a hysterical subject. Whatever statement he made would not be exaggerated, be it never so fantastic.

"It began with footsteps," said Goldsmid—"slow, dragging footsteps, and a noise like wind moaning through the passages, though, as you know, Jim, there wasn't a leaf stirring last night. Up and down went those beastly steps, pausing and re-passing my door, till at last I got up, took my torch, and had a look out."

"Nothing to see, I suppose?"

"Not a thing! But, believe me or not, as you like, whatever it was went on walking, even though I followed the sound with my torch, till the hair on the back of my neck began to stir, and I bolted back to bed absolutely sweating with fear. And I thought I knew something about occult mysteries!"

"It was the meaningless persistence, I think, that scared me most. Twice after that the door of my room flew open, and, as it had no lock or bolt, I put a heavy chair against it, and after that something came into my room. I could hear it moving stealthily about, though my torch—a fairly good one—showed me nothing at all."

"It was then I thought of coming in to you, but the noise in the passage became deafening: peals of frightful laughter, crashes, and through it all those dragging footsteps going monotonously up and down, quite undisturbed by the hubbub around them." He took out a handkerchief and wiped his forehead.

"And the worst part was that all the time I felt Deleghna was watching me, laughing, gloating over my fear. I suppose you think I'm making all this up, don't you, Jim?"

"I do not. As the Chief said when I told him I'd seen Griggs since his death, 'This is where one quotes Hamlet.'"

"You—say—you've seen—Griggs?"

"I have. And, what is more, he's helping me in this job. That is why, without previous knowledge of the occult, and hating it more than anything I've had to do since

I left the Incubator, I'm going to see it through, till, by the grace of God, we break this devil's tool known as Juan Deleghna."

For a moment Goldsmid was silent, staring down at Bascombe Manor, trying to reconcile its ancient beauty with the horror of the previous night. Trying, too, to connect the alangy, light-hearted comrade of Craddock's Own with this other Jim whose quiet words had such unflinching determination.

Jim, for his part, was also quietly studying his companion. Goldsmid looked very Semitic at that moment, the light breeze stirring the greasy curls on his forehead, and Jim noticed that the knuckles of his interlaced fingers were white, as though he were exerting emotional control.

"Look here, old thing, if you're cold—"

"I'm not, even if my feet are. I've the fitters, Jim; I get 'em periodically in S.O. Look here—is there anything you always wear—never take off, I mean?"

"Only my skin. I have a bath occasionally, you know."

"Don't fool!" said Goldsmid sharply.

"What about your wrist-watch?"

"That, like the poor, is always with me, except when I'm in one of the aforementioned baths."

"Give it to me."

Wondering, Jim unstrapped his rather large silver wrist-watch and handed it to his companion.

"Last time I flogged that, I got ten bob on it, Topsy. I'm not taking a penny less now."

Goldsmid did not answer. Already his sensitive hands were busy with the back of the watch, opening the cover with a surety which told he was no amateur.

"Give-away there," laughed Jim. "You've been on 'international observation' with van Wyke, evidently."

"Yes, 'Nelly' McCrane and I were with him in Utrecht about the time you entered the Incubator, Jim. We were after Polavinski."

He took something from one of his pockets, produced a pair of nail-scissors from another, and proceeded to cut a circle, which he fitted into the inside of the watch-case.

"Promise me you'll wear this always," he begged, "and keep it near you if you take it off."

"All right, if you're so set on my doing so. Am I allowed to see what it is?"

He took the watch, and examined the tiny circle of parchment Goldsmid had fitted into the case. It was yellow with age, and bore some Hebrew characters.

"Interesting, but unintelligible," he commented at length. "What is it all about, Topsy?"

"That's a phylactery, which protects the wearer against evil influences, or, to quote from old manuscripts, 'preserveth from all mischief of affrightment or enemies or evil spirits and all other dangers in arms or contests.'"

"Fairly inclusive, what? Though I doubt there being any arms or contests to test its efficiency, Topsy."

"Laugh, if you like, Jim, but if we're up against uncanny things, I hold we're justified in trying to protect ourselves by similar means. Of course, this really ought to be worn as a ligature round the upper arm; that's the way Aron has here—I gave her an engraved slave-bangle before I left London—but I can hardly expect you to break out into jewellery!"

"I should hope not! Got one yourself?"

"Yes, inside this ring, which I bought when I originally joined the 'Moon.' You may despoil it—"

"My dear old thing, I don't. Just one question now before we return to yonder

rhode of love. Why has J.D. brought that moron Sinclair down here? He obviously despises him."

"Because he's a subjective—an invaluable asset to the working of any kind of magic; takes the place of a conjurer's assistant, so to speak. Sinclair holds high enough degrees to have reached the point where 'King' ritual diverges from the harmless and beguiling as it were, to show its teeth in the first hint of black magic. The not-too-intelligent initiate often becomes an adept in that kind of thing, having little imagination, and consequently no scruples. Sinclair has been brought here for a specific purpose, just as I have, and what that purpose is we may or may not find out."

"Don't be such a blooming pessimist," said Jim. "Of course we'll find out. Isn't that what we're paid for?"

At luncheon, though Sinclair's heavy lids spoke eloquently of a sleepless night, Delegana was clear-eyed and entirely normal. Departing from his attitude of the previous night, he was very pleasant to the Master of Silver Lotus, thereby confirming Goldsmith's surmise that he intended making use of him.

After lunch, Delegana called Jim aside, and gave him instructions to take the car to Weston-super-Mare, there to pick up two strangers who would be awaiting him at an hotel.

"Have you ever heard of a man called Eric Manningford?" he asked.

Jim thought for a moment.

"Manningford? Somehow I know the name. Oh, yes, I've heard Aaron mention him. Edits some paper, doesn't he?"

"Yes. A rag called 'Sane Thought,' though sanity is the last thing one finds in its pages. He also writes for various periodicals, and has lately been attacking not only the O.T., but myself in his articles, accusing me of what he terms 'mumbo-jumbo.' As I cannot allow such accusations to pass unchallenged, I have invited him to visit me, bringing with him someone of his own choosing as witness, so that he may see for himself that certain things which he alleges to be mere frauds do really take place, and without any of the usual aids to charlatanism."

"Sort of seance?" suggested Jim.

"Not exactly. What we will do is more in the nature of a demonstration. I cannot allow myself to be publicly pilloried without giving my accuser genuine cause for doubt. If I fail to convince Manningford that there are certain influences subject to an adept's will, he will be at liberty to expose me in every paper in Europe—or the world."

Jim took full advantage of Delegana's permission not to hurry, and reached the big hotel on the sea front at Weston-super-Mare with just time in hand to get his passengers to Bascombe for tea.

As they came out to the car, he saw at once that neither Eric Manningford, plump, fortyish, and wearing horn-rimmed glasses, nor his fair-haired young companion were foemen worthy of Delegana's steel. It was only when the porter put two suitcases into the car that Jim knew the visitors contemplated spending the night at Bascombe Manor.

During tea, and in the interval which divided that meal from supper, both strangers were obviously puzzled. Delegana and his friends were so normal, and the conversation so very much that of any English week-end party in any country house, that they were finding it hard to associate it with the movement against which Manningford was conducting his crusade.

Only after they had gone to their rooms for a pre-supper wash and brush-up, and

Delegana was alone with Jim, did he let fall his mask of courteous, attentive host.

"So!" he said bitterly, "that thing has come to challenge my occult powers! That! I can force myself to suffer fools, Jaime, so long as they remain harmless fools—but when they try to oppose me, then I strike—and strike hard."

He crossed the room to a fine, canvas-mounted brass-rubbing which hung beside the open hearth and pressed a spring. Instantly the canvas rolled up to reveal a thick oak door, studded with copper nail-heads.

"The entrance to my meditation-room," he said. "Tell me, Jaime, have you no fear of what I can do?"

"None, sir."

"Are you quite sure of that?"

"I am."

Delegana laid his hand on the door, which yielded easily to the pressure.

"Come," he said, "I think I will test the truth of that answer."

THE heavy door closed with a muffled thud, and Jim found himself in the queerest room he had ever seen.

For a moment he had the impression he was inside a huge brightly burnished bowl, for the walls were lined from floor to ceiling with copper and roofed over with the same metal, broken at intervals by small gratings, which, he supposed, must admit air, for there were no windows.

The place was illuminated by a diffused glow, certainly not produced by the oil-lamps which lit the rest of the Manor, and this light, reflected from the gleaming walls, gave the effect of the copper sunlight which sometimes precedes a typhoon.

Five plain wooden chairs made up the entire furnishing, save for a block of something which looked like jade, in the hollowed centre of which rested an enormous crystal. There were no curtains, screens, nor—as far as Jim could make out—material of any kind in the room.

"You see, Jaime," said Delegana, "I do not depend on outside effects for my magic—nor do I even need a large audience. Look!" He rested one hand on the wall and the light increased, till Jim felt as though his eyes were being burned in their sockets by a tropic sun.

Brighter and brighter became the merciless light, wave after wave returning, intensified, from the polished walls; and he became conscious that Delegana was no longer with him, but that he was alone, trapped in this over-heated metal box. Summoning every ounce of courage, he fought down rising claustrophobic panic, knowing that, were he to lose control, something was waiting to take possession of his entity—something which would leave it swept and garnished, ready for the 'seven other devils' of occult lore. He dared not call upon his God, or focus his whirling senses on any well-known landmark, lest the watchful Delegana should wrest the thoughts from his falling mental grasp.

"I'm in Somerset now"—he was fighting his light-tortured brain to resist the dangerous blank which would give Delegana his opportunity—"Somerset—Devon—Cornwall—Cornwall!"

And with that muttered word came the connection with Gregory and the comforting knowledge that he was no longer fighting alone. The torturing light still battered at his consciousness, but it was now a definite pain, better a thousand times than the encroaching inertia of the preceding minutes.

Gradually the walls lost their eye-searing brightness, the light seemed to be fading, till suddenly it went out altogether, and, in the brief moment of obscurity, he heard Gregory's voice in his ear.

"Reconstruct every detail you can remember of James Hogan's boyhood, Harry—the pictures must be yours, not his."

A light sprang up in the block supporting the crystal, casting an angry green glow upward on the face of Delegana, standing once again by his side.

"Let us look into the shew-stone, Jaime, so that we may see both back and forward."

He put a hand on Jim's arm, and guided him to the centre of the room.

"Kneel," he commanded.

Jim obeyed, and found to his surprise that there was a thick mat beneath his knees, though he could have sworn it had not been there before the light went out.

"Look long, look long," murmured Delegana, his face satanic in the green light.

Choking back the urge to add "—into the water, Melisande," Jim knew that normally had returned to him, and thanked his stars he had spent so much time in working out James Hogan's past history.

But, though he was mentally rehearsing incidents of that non-existent individual's early life, he was totally unprepared for the pictures which appeared with startling clarity in the heart of the crystal.

Too busy concentrating on his Hogan identity to wonder at the success of his thought-projection, he watched the scenes passing through the crystal, so distinct that they might have been portions of a well-screened silent film. Almost, he expected to see captions.

There was James Francis Hogan, a sturdy, rather defiant small boy, lining up with his fellows outside the chapel of a Christian Brothers' school; J.F.H. listening to an obviously fiery speech given by an orator from the tail of a cart in the square of a typical Irish country town; the same boy receiving whispered instructions, and taking charge of a letter given to him by a young man in I.R.A. uniform; James Francis serving his first garage apprenticeship; selling his first car; meeting Aaron "Millar" for the first time . . .

"And now, Jaime—the future."

"That," thought Jim, "is your pigeon, my friend."

When Delegana took charge the pictures were more difficult to follow, for so many were obscurely symbolic. That he intended to be the dominating factor in Jim's future was supremely obvious, for Aaron hardly ever appeared, though Delegana was seldom off the stage. Apparently some appalling catastrophe was to overtake the Western world, for Delegana appeared as some king or supreme ruler, seated on a symbolic throne above what looked like a free-for-all international melee. Besides him, also crowned, Jim himself, wearing such a fatuously beatific expression that the original had to dig his nails hard into his palms to stifle his rising laughter.

Had his first glimpse of occult magic ceased with the fading of that sanity-shaking light, Jim might have left the mystery room considerably impressed, but the crystal-gazing had reduced the awe-inspiring to the ridiculous. By some uncanny means Delegana had called up those pictures in the crystal, but he—Jim Haugh—had supplied the material, which had been faithfully reproduced, even down to those episodes which he had invented on the spur of the moment.

"Rise, Jaime."

The green light died out and there was a momentary reversion to darkness before the original faint radiance shone once more from its hidden source. Delegana still stood by his side, but the mat on which he had knelt had completely disappeared. Once more Jim grappled with an almost overpowering urge to laugh, the whisking away of that mat was so extraordinarily reminiscent of a conjurer at a children's party.

"You are impressed, my Jaime?"

"I should think so! You are wonderful, sir."

"And I, too, am impressed, Jaime, did you notice anything strange or out of the ordinary in the few remarks we exchanged just now?"

"Only that your voice sounded rather as if it came from a distance, sir."

"Would you be surprised to know that I never spoke aloud?"

"You're joking, sir!"

"I am speaking the truth. Your mind-vibrations and mine are so closely tuned that there is no need of words between us to establish communication. . . . See, we will do it again. Just think your replies, do not utter them."

Then ensued surely the strangest conversation that ever passed between two men of such widely divergent natures. Neither spoke aloud, yet each sentence came as clear to the other's mental ear as though the words were shouted.

"There!" triumphed Delegana at length. "That is enough for the moment; telepathy is always something of a strain. Have I proved the link, Chiquito?"

"You have, sir."

So it was true what Gregory had said! One did not need to be in sympathy with another human being to have the same thought-wave length; need not even like that being. . . .

"It certainly is queer, sir."

"Call me Juan when we are alone, Jaime—let me hear you now."

"All right, Juan."

"Look at me."

Again, as on that first day, clear blue and amber met, but this time it was not the blue which fell; and Jim saw with amused surprise that Delegana was swaying on his feet as the young Imperial Briton had swayed that night in the London study.

"Hold up, sir—Juan, I mean. You're tired."

Delegana passed a shaking hand across his forehead.

"Perhaps I am. Dico! Jaime, I must be careful what I teach you of the Mysteries, or the pupil will fast outstrip the master. Listen! I hear our guests in the Judgment Room. I think the moment has arrived for us to impress the over-confident Manningford. Give me your hand."

A touch on the wall, and they were in the darkness again.

"This way, Jaime."

Towed in Delegana's wake, Jim knew by the atmospheric change in the blackness around him that they had left the room, though not, he thought, by the obvious door. A dank smell, and the fact that they were walking in single file between walls, suggested that they were in one of the many secret passages which were rumored to run between the walls of the old house.

Delegana must have had a good bump of direction, for they proceeded at an ordinary walking pace, and never once did he check or seem at a loss. Then the ground sloped under their feet. They were going down. A stretch of level floor, and no longer the sense of confining walls.

Jim swore suddenly as his foot struck something, and he put down his free hand to discover what it was.

Delegana halted instantly.

"Are you all right, Jaime?"

"Perfectly, thanks. I only tripped over the light cable."

"So you have discovered my little secret, eh? I might have known a motor mechanic would also have some knowledge of electricity, and would guess I had other sources of light than the oil-lamps used in the house. Listen!"

The darkness was intense, almost solid, and at first Jim could hear nothing save the drip, drip, which gave him a clue as to their whereabouts. Then, faint but unmistakable, he heard the hum of a dynamo.

"Worked by water-power from the underground river which flows most conveniently through the cave upon which Bascombe is built." Delegana's tone was that of one conspirator to another. "A house built on a rock—quite biblical! The cave runs for some distance under the hill, and I must show you the workings one day. But not now; my engineers might be distracted by the sight of a stranger."

Engineers! Men living a secret, hidden life at Delegana's command. This must be the explanation of the footsteps and demoniacal laughter of which Goldsmid had spoken.

"Of what are you thinking, Jaime?"

"What a wonderful organizer you are, Juan," answered Jim, with truth; adding, as though to himself, "and what a man to follow!"

Delegana's fingers tightened on his in a distastefully affectionate pressure.

"Ah, Jaime, Jaime, you exceed my greatest expectations! But we must go on. Already, as host, my absence has been discourteously long."

They moved on again, and soon the ground began to slope upwards, till Jim felt carpeted boards beneath his feet once more.

"We must stay a moment here, Jaime, lest we appear in the unaccustomed light blinking like a pair of owls."

Jim felt himself guided through a doorway, and the next minute both he and Delegana were, in truth, blinking like a pair of owls.

Once his eyes became used to the light, he saw they were in a small room, evidently one of the priest's holes used during historical persecutions, though the switch-board which took up the whole of one side would have caused a sensation to the refugee for whom the chamber had been built.

"The switches for my meditation-room, Jaime."

"Quite," said Jim, and knew then that Delegana was ignorant of electricity. There was but one switch for light, and that controlled the single globe which lit the room itself, and, even without the Spanish instructions as to tone and volume, Jim would have known that he was looking at a well-planned panel erected for the control of not light, but sound.

"And now," said Delegana, "into the dark once more."

A few yards up an unseen passage, led by Delegana's guiding hand, then the grip was released, and, though he never knew how it happened, he found they were standing in the Judgment Room, facing Manningford and Dicker, and well away from the wall or any possible means of entrance.

"Forgive my rudeness," began Delegana suavely, "but I had work which could not be postponed. Hogan, here, has been helping me in my secretary's absence."

For a few moments no one else spoke, and it would have been hard to tell which of the five men was the more astonished, though Jim alone gave no outward sign. Even Sinclair and Goldsmid were evidently unprepared for this, though their amazement was instantly suppressed.

"But—but—" stammered Manningford. "I—I never saw you come in."

"They didn't," declared Dicker. "I can swear to that. Hang it all, I was looking at the very spot where they're standing now, trying to make out the pattern on that rug—and they just appeared!"

"You have, perhaps, heard of dematerialisation?" suggested Delegana quietly.

He crossed to the table upon which Garcia had placed glasses and decanter. Jim, obeying his unspoken order, followed.

"Sherry, Mr. Manningford? I know one ought not to praise one's own wines, but let me recommend a glass of liquid sunshine. Not for you? Nor Mr. Dicker either? Ah! I see why you refuse, gentlemen, but you need have no fear. I have far too much respect for good wine to insult the vintage by drugging it! Nor—though I fear you will disbelieve me—would I so abuse my position as your host. But perhaps you are both total abstainers?"

"They weren't in the hotel at Weston," muttered Jim, giving a very good imitation of loyal resentment of the implied insult to his employer, "they were drinking liqueur brandies."

"Is that so? Ring for Garcia, Jaime, and I will tell him to bring cognac."

"No, no," interposed Manningford. "I will take a glass of sherry, if I may alter my mind."

"But of course! And Mr. Dicker? . . . Jaime, do not look so indignant. You must remember that Mr. Manningford and I are avowed antagonists, though we shall, I hope, manage to fight like gentlemen." He raised his glass: "Your health, gentlemen."

The visitors bowed polite acknowledgment, but Jim noticed that neither of them touched their sherry till his glass and those of Sinclair and Goldsmid were nearly empty. Though his sympathies were entirely with the strangers, the mischievous imp in him made him long to collapse on the floor and writhe there in pretended agonies.

Deliberately, he set himself to convey this idea to Delegana, succeeding so well that his employer laughed.

"No, Jaime, you must not!" he said aloud, "though I agree it would be very amusing."

Then, as though noticing the surprise on the faces around him, he offered an explanation.

"Forgive me, gentlemen, but when at Bascombe I am on holiday, and do not perhaps 'watch my step' as I do in London or elsewhere. Otherwise I should not have answered Jaime's remark aloud."

"Aloud?" queried Manningford.

"Just so. Hogan and I do not need the clumsy medium of the spoken word in our communications. If you watch, you will often see he performs some small service for me as though I had asked him to do so—Well, I have, but not so that others can hear. There is nothing new in telepathy, my dear Manningford, though I admit that not many people have such an excellent private line. We very seldom get the wrong number, do we, Jaime?"

"Hardly ever, sir," replied Jim, and the casual way he spoke was effective. "Never, unless one of us doesn't want to listen!"

Delegana laughed. "An impertinent lad,

this," he said. "He has small respect for his president, and still less for his employer. But privileged, Manningford—almost my official jester, as it were. We take life too seriously in these days."

Across the room, Goldsmid was trying to sort out his facts. That Jim should be Delegana's latest favorite was easy enough to understand. The Irishman's blunt, downright outlook would be intriguing to one surfeited, as was Delegana, with the self-seeking pandering of the average C.T. member. But that he and the occultist should be in such close mental touch that effortless telepathy were possible between them, or that Jim should already be so far advanced, that he was able to participate in that sudden appearance through the wall, was hard to explain.

Learned in the earlier magical decrees, the method of Delegana's unobserved arrival in the Judgment Room was no secret to him, but he had been as amazed as was Sinclair to see Jim with him, for both adepts knew that the newcomer did not consciously practise hypnotism himself. Again a wave of apprehension swept over the Jew. Was Jim being too thorough? Would his flawless playing of this role take him so far beneath the surface of everyday occultism that it might be impossible for him to get free in the end? Like Colonel Lawther, Goldsmid did not enjoy contemplation of such a possibility.

At supper that evening Delegana continued to play the charming host, letting a little gaiety creep into his speech and actions, as though, among these good companions, he were really letting himself go. Yet he always kept in the background, as it were, the shadow of something beyond the ordinary; subtly he was creating an atmosphere of panic, such as can be felt in moments of intense crisis, when those who know the real truth of the situation talk gaily and reassuringly of anything but the danger at hand, and, by their assumption of carelessness, strike further terror into the layman's heart.

So, by the time they all returned to the Judgment Room, Eric Manningford and his young friend had been, without their knowledge, prepared for what was to come. "Do you both wish to come in to this demonstration?" asked Delegana, as he opened the door to the meditation-room. "Ah, of course, Mr. Dicker is your witness, Manningford! I had forgotten we are under suspicion! Jaime, you will remain out here and give a full and honest account of anyone who comes into this room—whoever they be. If Sinclair, Lewis, or even myself emerge during the sitting, you are to tell Mr. Manningford afterwards. You understand?"

"Perfectly, sir."

"You may rely on Hogan's honesty," said Delegana, "and his obedience to my orders. Now, gentlemen—you see there can be no concealment. This is the only door, and there are no windows. Those gratings, which admit the air, would not allow a mouse to pass through them."

"And the light?" asked Manningford.

"Is such as was never seen on land or sea," replied Delegana. "As you will very soon discover. . . . Au revoir, Jaime—don't go to sleep. You'll find the unsophisticated brand of cigarettes you affect in that box."

He held open the door for the strangers to enter the room where Sinclair and Goldsmid were already waiting, and looking in, Jim saw the place was brightly and normally lit.

Then the heavy door closed, and Jim was left alone in the Judgment Room. Placing

his arm-chair so that he could, without moving his head, keep watch on the door through which the five men had just passed, he gave himself up to serious thought, safe in the knowledge that Delegana would be too busy to do any mind-tapping.

Though he fully realised the value of the link between himself and his employer, he was not too pleased to find himself in such close mental touch with the man upon whom it was his duty to spy. With a healthy individual's instinctive shrinking from the unusual, he had recoiled a little even from post-mortem communications with Gregory, although these had been of infinite value to him, but Delegana was a very different proposition.

Snatches of the conversation he had heard between Delegana and Payton passed through his memory—"A man so magnetic that he renders all other magnetism useless—he is entirely unaware of his own power—it is lying there useless, like some great automobile lacking a driver—I shall be that driver, Hector."

He had been faintly amused by that conversation, thinking, at the time, how far Delegana was from actual fact. Now he was not so sure. Delegana had undoubtedly occult powers—he could not deny him that—and must have sensed the receptivity in Jim of which he himself had been unaware.

It was very quiet in the Judgment Room, and he could not help feeling there was something lacking in a country house which contained no dogs. He would have given much to have had his father's red setter stretched at his feet, velvet-soft muzzle laid adoringly across his instep.

Something presently prompted Jim to fix his eyes on the fireside door, and he was idly counting the studs in the heavy oak, when his vision was obscured, and a huge negro, naked save for a pair of scarlet shorts, stood before him.

For a moment Jim thought he was dreaming, till a wide smile split the black face in a friendly greeting. However he had come, the man was undoubtedly there. "Good evenin', suh."

"Good evening," returned Jim, clutching at his reeling senses. "Stopping long?"

"No, suh. I'm mighty cold in these lit' drawers. I think I'll get below to the furnace. Have I yore permission to retire, suh?"

"Sure," replied Jim in the vernacular. "That's O.K. by me."

"Thank you, suh. Then I think I'll be getting along."

He favored Jim with another flashing smile, crossed the room and, as far as human eyes could make out, vanished through the wall.

"Well, I'll be hanged!" said Jim aloud.

He rose from his chair, and going to the spot where the man had disappeared, felt all over the wall for trace of a spring or concealed handle, without success. Returning to the fireside, he put himself through every known test, finding his hands steady, his direction faultless, and his ability to stand on one leg unimpaired. Not even the most virulent anti-drink fanatic could have doubted his sobriety.

"And that's that," he muttered. "I suppose I now sit back and wait for a couple of Chinese!"

But it was the seance party who emerged, normally, from the other room, and by the appointed door.

"Hogan," began Manningford, without preliminary. "did you see anyone come out of that room?"

"Yes."

"Who was it?"

"The blackest man I know," replied Jim, "—or, to be correct, that I have ever seen. Our acquaintance, though pleasant, was somewhat brief."

"How did he open the door?"

"He didn't. As far as I could see, he came through the wall, volunteered the information that he was cold, asked my permission to withdraw, and vanished in the same fashion just over there."

"Then he spoke to you?"

"In passing, as it were."

"Who was he?"

"There you have me. To the best of my knowledge and belief, we have not met before."

"You see, gentlemen?" Delegana's voice was gently apologetic. "There was no deception. Are you now satisfied, Mr. Manningford, or do you wish me to take you further?"

"If you can. So far, I have seen nothing which could not be done by any musical-hall illusionist."

"As you will. What about you, Mr. Dicker?"

"No, thanks," said Dicker hastily; "I'm quite satisfied with what I've seen."

"Very well. I should like you all to take note that we are going further into the Mysteries at Mr. Manningford's own request, and that no compulsion whatever has been used to lure him into that room once more."

"I don't think anyone could accuse you of that, Mr. Delegana."

"Thank you, Mr. Dicker. Jaime, see to our guest, and entertain him while we endeavor to prove to his friend that it is unwise to doubt an occultist's power. Come, Brothers."

It seemed to Jim that Sinclair and Goldsmid, who had dropped wearily into armchairs as soon as they entered the Judgment Room, were reluctant for further experiment, but they rose obediently, and once more the door closed on the now-diminished party.

"Whisky, Dicker?"

"Please. And make it stiffish, if you will."

Jim, looking at the other man over the hissing syphon, saw that he was very pale, and the hand he held out for his glass was shaking uncontrollably.

"I gather you did not enjoy the demonstration, Dicker?"

"How could I? It was ghastly! I say, did that nigger really come in here?"

"He most certainly did."

"Offering no explanation?"

"He was in a hurry. After all, it's a chilly night, and his sole wear was a pair of abbreviated red shorts."

"He'd less when he appeared to us. Nothing at all, in fact. Hogan, you seem a sensible sort of fellow—what do you think of all this occult business?"

"I think it's mighty interesting. But, as I told Mr. Manningford this afternoon, I've only just joined up, and novices aren't allowed to take part in the mysteries—they know too little and too much, if you get me. Hullo! Here's our dark friend again! Working overtime to-night, aren't you, Sambo?"

This time the negro did not linger, but passed quickly through the room, pausing at the far wall to flash on Jim his wide, friendly smile.

"Joshua!" he said, and vanished—apparently through the wall once more.

"Well, now we know his name," com-

mented Jim, "that's something, anyway. One thing, he can't be accused of outstaying his welcome!"

Dicker took a handkerchief from his pocket and mopped a moist brow.

"Good lord! I wish I could take it as calmly as you do, Hogan! Though I suppose this appearing and disappearing business is nothing to you, since you did it yourself this evening."

"Without having the faintest idea of how it happened," said Jim, adhering to the "hush" principle of using the truth when possible. "One moment I was outside this room, and the next I was bang in, trying to look as if I did that sort of thing every day of the week and twice on Sundays! Of course, I knew adepts could do it whenever they like, but only the president could take a low-degree member with him."

"Amazing! Do you know, Hogan, I'm beginning to think that Manningford has bitten off rather more than he can chew."

"I'm perfectly sure he has," returned Jim with conviction, "and I can't conceive why he wants to interfere. If he thinks the Boss is doing anything wrong, why doesn't he go to the police?"

"He did, and they laughed at him. Quite politely, you know; but they said religious societies, as long as they behaved themselves, were nothing to do with the police. Religious! I ask you! So Manningford thought—Good heavens! What's that?"

A scream, of such intensity that it pierced even the thickness of the door, came shattering from the other room, followed by a muffled thudding, as though someone were frantically seeking escape.

"Dicker! Dicker! Let me out! This light—this damnable light—it's killing me!"

For a second Dicker sat as though glued to his chair; then he shot across the room and began tugging futilely at the iron drop-handle.

"It opens inwards," advised Jim quietly. "Be careful not to use force, the fool is probably leaning against the inner side."

As though stung by the even tones, Dicker raised his voice to a shout.

"All right, Manningford! I'll get this infernal door open if I have to dynamite it!"

He took a few steps backwards, as though prepared to launch an assault, but Jim laid a restraining hand on his arm.

"Don't make a fool of yourself, man. It will open at a touch."

He laid his hand on the door and it yielded easily, swinging inwards to reveal not the cruel light he expected, but ordinary mild illumination. Save for its copper walls, the room was normal; even the crystal and its stand were nowhere to be seen, and on three high-backed chairs sat Delegana, Sinclair, and Goldsmid, watching the half-lit antics of Manningford.

"Take me out—take me out! This solitude is driving me mad! I've been alone—alone in that awful place—"

He dashed past them and tore across the Judgment Room, only to be stopped by the door into the rest of the house, previously locked at his request, the key of which was even now repeating in Dicker's pocket.

It was then Delegana spoke, and the contempt in his voice brought the distracted man to his senses.

"Really, Mr. Manningford, I must ask you to control yourself! If you remember, you asked me to lock that door in order to eliminate the possibility of fraud on my part.

If you wish to leave us, you have but to ask Dicker for the key."

Manningford passed a hand across his eyes and stared incredulously through the open door at the three figures still seated in their chairs, beside which his own lay overturned, where he had flung it in his panic-stricken flight.

"How—how did you get there?"

"We have never been away. Hogan and Dicker can testify that we were seated here when they answered your screams for help."

"Is this true, Dicker?" asked Manningford.

"Undoubtedly. No one could have looked less disturbed than they did when we came in. I think you must have imagined something."

With a weary grace Delegana got to his feet and, followed by the other adepts, came into the Judgment Room, locking the studded door behind him and handing the key to Jim.

As though it were a matter of routine, Jim touched the spring which released the roller of the brass-rubbing, arranged it so that it hung straight, and placed the key upon a nail beside the fireplace.

"You observe," said Delegana, "I do not even hide the key of my torture-chamber! Light the spirit-lamp, Jaime, mio—I think some strong black coffee might calm Mr. Manningford's nerves. Unless, of course, you find coffee drives away your sleep, Manningford?"

"Sleep!" cried Manningford passionately. "Can you imagine that I could sleep in this house? Delegana, you're a fiend—a devil in league with devils—I'll not stay here any longer, if I have to walk to Weston. But don't think you've heard the last of this—I'll expose you in every paper in England!"

Delegana leaned forward and lit his cigarette from the match held for him by Jim.

"As for leaving my house," he said, "you are at liberty to do so when you choose. I would not dream of holding a guest against his will, but I do not fear your exposure, Mr. Manningford."

"You'll get it, all the same."

"I do not think so."

He walked over to the fireplace, standing, after the manner of the traditional English host, with his back to the grate. His movements were slow and deliberate, lazy even, as was his soft, drawling voice; yet he dominated the room. Imperceptibly the others faded, fusing, like a theatre audience, into a conglomerate entity, intent on the dramatic clash between the two protagonists.

"You're thinking," said Manningford violently, "will make no difference to my actions. I'll allow, if you like, that you have certain occult powers, given to you by the source of all evil in order that you may bully your dupes, but that only strengthens my determination to show you up. It is my duty, both as a British citizen and a Christian, to give publicity to the devilry I have seen to-night."

"Even though, by so doing, you will be making a greater fool of yourself than any man has ever done before?" suggested Delegana, his exasperating calm rasping the other's jangled nerves. "I have been very patient with you, Manningford, but that patience is nearly exhausted. Remember, I too, have the pen of a ready writer, and I can write a campaign quicker than any other weapon. I fear you would look rather foolish if I were to tell how you bothered

me for a demonstration, came to my house, ate my salt, and then insulted and abused me."

"May I point out that you challenged me to do the very thing for which you are now reviling me? There are certain papers which would relish the story of how, having doubted my occult ability, even going so far as to call ritual workings 'mumbo-jumbo,' you then broke down and screamed like an hysterical woman at your first sight of a very minor mystery. I can almost see the headlines. I will remind you that I did not force the demonstration upon you—I think Mr. Dicker can bear me out there. Can you honestly say I have harmed you in any way?"

"But you looked me in—the left me alone under the glare of that pitiless light!"

"Did I? Both Dicker and Hogan saw what was in the room when your screams brought them hurrying to open the unlocked door. Dicker, I will put the question to you, since Hogan, being in my employ, is no doubt suspect. Did you see anything unusual or terrifying when you came to Mr. Manningford's aid?"

"Frankly, no."

"And was there anything pitiless about the lighting of the room?"

"It looked ordinary enough to me."

"Was there anyone there besides Mr. Manningford?"

"Yourself, Sinclair, and Lewis."

"What were we doing?"

"Nothing, as far as I could see. Just sitting on chairs."

"Thank you, Dicker. I am afraid, Manningford, that a clever counsel will not have difficulty in disposing of your case when I bring my action for defamation of character. For that is what I shall do, the moment your first article appears in print. Come! I am a generous man. I will let you off your public apology. The fact that you cease to write against me will be sufficient."

A trapped look came over Manningford's face. Delegana held the master position, and he knew it. There was something pathetic in his appeal to Dicker.

"You say something."

"In my opinion," said Dicker, "Mr. Delegana has been very fair. We may not approve of his manifestations, but they are undoubtedly genuine. Nor, as far as I can see, was there any attempt to frighten us unnecessarily. For instance, Hogan could so easily have added to my fear when I saw a negro suddenly appear through the wall, by pretending to be frightened too. If he hadn't been so calm, I should probably have gone off the deep end as badly as you did a few minutes later."

"So you," said Manningford, "have gone over to the enemy!"

Dicker flushed to the roots of his fair hair.

"That's hardly a fair remark. You asked for my opinion; I was only giving it dispassionately."

"Thank you, Dicker," put in Delegana, with a touch of restrained sadness which completed the younger man's surrender. You have confirmed my first impression of you."

"Which was?"

"That of a fair-minded man, just beyond the ordinary."

"He's got him!" thought Jim. "Horse, foot and guns, he's won him over."

"Don't you think," continued Delegana, "that we have perhaps got things a little out of proportion to-night? With the exception of Hogan, whom nothing ever ruffles, our nerves are not as steady as they should be. My fellow-Compara-

tives are, I feel sure, as exhausted as I am myself. You, Dicker, as well as Manningford, are wearied by the strain of your first glimpse of the Unknown. So, unless you are both absolutely set on leaving Bascombe to-night—a move which, incidentally, will be rather hard on Hogan, who will have to drive you—I suggest a good dose of bromide, bed, and the sleep which knits up the ravelled sleeve of care, the death of each day's life for all of us. Well, Manningford, which is it to be? A night beneath my roof, or instant flight to Weston?"

"I—I—" began Manningford.
"Jaime!" snapped Delegana. "Get out the car!"

"Very good, sir," interrupted Manningford. "I've changed my mind—I'll stay."
His hands clenched on the arms of his chair and he levered himself to his feet. For a second he stood erect, swaying from side to side, then sat down again and, burying his face in his hands, burst into a passion of tears.

Had the fate of Craddock's Own depended on it, Jim could not have concealed the embarrassment he felt. He had witnessed distressing outbursts before; viewed unmoved the hysterics of the Latin races; but the sight of this middle-aged Englishman weeping before his avowed enemy shamed him as he had never been shamed before.

Without even a glance at Delegana he went to Manningford's side and touched his shoulder.

"Come along, sir. Dicker and I will take you up to bed. You're worn out." Manningford raised his head. His glasses were blurred and tears coursed unchecked down his cheeks. Catching Jim's hand, he rested his head against the Irishman's arm, clinging to him like a frightened child, his fat body shaken with sobs.

Deeply uncomfortable, Jim patted him on the back, murmuring, "Steady on, steady on," while Goldsmid and Sinclair sat with downcast eyes, and Delegana watched him, smiling cynically.

Then Dicker pulled himself together. "Good idea, Hogan. If you'll help, we'll get him upstairs."

But Manningford clung to Jim in panic. "Keep him away, Hogan!" he whimpered. "Don't let him touch me! You may be on the other side, but you're honest—not like that—thats Judas."

Jim exchanged glances with Dicker. "Better leave him to me."

Wondering if the rest of his days were to be spent in ministering to those whom Delegana had frightened out of normality, he half led, half-carried the fat little man upstairs, where he undressed him, dosed him with sedative, and remained at his bedside till he had fallen asleep.

Even then he was not free to seek his own bed, for he had yet to pay his nightly visit to Delegana's room. Once there, it seemed he was about to have another nerve case on his hands, for he found the President of Comparative Thought seated in an advanced ritual position beneath an open window, naked as he day he was born, his hands outstretched towards the star-studded sky, while he invoked the deities of the air in a moaning sing-song.

"O devas—ye servants of the Great Ones, hear me! Carry my prayers, O messengers, to the portals of the Universal Lodge—Great Ones, are ye deaf to my cry? I have done your bidding . . ."

He was shaking convulsively, his naked

body exposed to a rising wind made chill by frost, gray-blue with cold.

Without ceremony Jim strode to the window and closed it, none too gently.

"Get up, Juan, and put something on." Delegana looked at him blankly, his eyes expressionless pools, only a rim of gold visible on the outer edge of the dilated pupils. Then came recognition.

"Jaime—Jaime—I cannot get them—I cannot get them—"

"Never mind that now," said Jim. "Come on—into your pyjamas and dressing-gown, and warm up before the fire. Of all the mad ideas, sitting about starko on a winter's night is the barriest I've ever known!"

He stirred the fire to a brighter blaze, hoping that whatever drug Delegana had taken would have a rapid effect. He did not relax an all-night sitting with a second nerve-racked patient.

Delegana was now crouching by the fire, holding his hands to the warmth, and again Jim was struck by the resemblance to Gregory—a resemblance with a difference.

"Jaime—is he watching you too?"

"Who?"
For answer Delegana pointed to a table in one corner of the room, on which stood a large photograph which Jim had never seen before. A small red light was burning before it, and in the glow it certainly did seem as though the pictured eyes were fixed on the men by the fire.

"May I have a closer look?" asked Jim.

He went over to the table and moved aside the red light in order to inspect the photograph. It was evidently an excellent likeness of an elderly man in the uniform of a British general: clipped moustache above a thin-lipped, determined mouth, eyes honest and direct, the whole face telling a tale of prejudice and unwavering loyalty to caste and creed. The face of an aristocrat of the old school.

"Nice-looking old buffer," observed Jim. "Who is he?"

"My grandfather. The man who turned my mother out of his house when she dared to love my father. To whom, when widowed, she brought her only child—then aged fifteen—to her old home in this very country—and he turned her from the door."

"Curse him! Curse him! Day and night I pray that he may be tortured in the spirit world, yet somehow he triumphs, and I know he is unharned. I have done all that I know would hurt him—his son was killed in the war, and even now his son's son cries aloud for his inheritance, sold to meet death duties and taxes during the victorious peace—while I, the despised and rejected, reign in his stead—I, Juan Bascombe Delegana! I, who will use my every power, my uttermost influence, to bring down this hateful nation to the dust."

He sprang to his feet, his body shaken by the passion within him, his words pouring out like a molten stream.

"Yet, does he care?—his long forefinger pointed to the photograph. "No! He still looks at me, conquering, unconquerable—the only man I could never bend to my will—No, there are two. He, whom I hated, and you, Jaime—whom I love—"

At the last word the fire died out of him, and he fell as though he had been shot through the heart, crumpling sideways on the purple carpet.

With a resigned sigh Jim picked him up, removed his dressing-gown, and placed him in the ornate bed.

For a moment he lay still. Then his eyes opened and he sat upright.

"Liberation!" he cried, and fell back on his pillows. The drug had taken effect. Detachedly Jim thrust the cold hands beneath the bedclothes and pulled the silken sheets round Delegana's shoulders.

"Well," he said to himself. "Of all the extraordinary jobs! Alice in Wonderland isn't in it!"

As he closed the door softly behind him a truly horrifying sound came from the far end of the passage, starting with a long-drawn-out wail, and increasing to a shriek which might have shaken even Jim's steady nerves had he not previously seen that panel in the priest's hole. The slow, dragging footsteps, too, were terribly uncanny, and it was only when a whiff of that slight, indescribable odor which, to Western senses, seems to cling about a colored man, came to his nostrils that he placed Joshua as O.C. sound effects.

"Good night—Mr. Ghost!"
From the darkness came a warm, throaty chuckle, and a large hand was laid for an instant on his arm.

"I reckon it would take more'n a hant to scare you, Mister Hogan. I'm laying off now; Boss says them stranger has had enough for one night."

"I should think so," returned Jim with feeling. "Good night, Joshua."

AS usual, Jim was the only one of the Bascombe house-party visible in the earlier part of the following morning. It was he who presided over the scanty breakfast eaten by Manningford and Dicker, and who, at the visitors' request, rang up Cupples' garage for a car to take them to Weston-super-Mare.

"I'd like to run you back myself," he apologised, "but I can't without Mr. Delegana's authority."

Manningford, badly shaved and shivering in the chilly dining-room, looked at him from bloodshot eyes.

"I wouldn't go in his car if you had his authority fifty times over. All I wish is that I had never seen him."

Jim helped himself to more honey. He felt there should be some loyal retort to this remark, but at the moment he could not think of a good one.

The reformer's spirit, though crushed, was not dead in Manningford.

"I'm sure I could help to obtain other employment, Hogan," he continued; "I have very many business friends."

"Why?" asked Jim innocently. "It's very decent of you to offer, sir, but I'm in a good job already."

"Surely 'good' is not an appropriate term?"

"Indeed it is," said Jim, purposefully obtuse. "Mr. Delegana pays me well, and is always most considerate. I wouldn't leave him for anything, and I don't know what my wife would say if I even suggested it!"

Delegana had not put in an appearance by the time the hired car arrived, and while Garcia was helping Manningford on with his overcoat, Dicker drew Jim aside.

"You mustn't mind the old boy," he said. "He's a bit rattled this morning. Didn't sleep too well, I imagine."

"You don't look as if you'd had much of a night yourself," remarked Jim.

Dicker flushed. "To be honest, I hadn't. I say, Hogan, what was that appalling scream not long after we went to bed? It was followed by a sort of dragging noise, and I thought someone laughed."

"That? Only the ghost. He, or she, or it, was particularly quiet last night; you ought to have been here on Saturday. Lewis told me it kept up the racket till morning."

"And you slept through it?"
"I did. Of course, I heard it last night, because it went off in my ear just as I left Manningford's room. In fact, I was afraid it would wake him, so I waited for a bit outside his door and heard it trailing away, laughing to itself. After that all was quiet on the spiritual front, and, I suppose, remained so all night."

"You're an amazing fellow, Hogan!" said Dicker, and went out to the waiting car.
"I'm an amazing liar," thought Jim, as he did the farewell honors from the front steps, waving a cheerful good-bye to the departing guests.

When he turned back to the house he almost collided with Joshua, who, clad in a well-cut grey suit, his white collar dazzling against the dark neck it encircled, was standing just behind him.

"Morning, Joshua. You're looking very pleased with yourself."

"I sure am, Mr. Hogan. Garcia has just brought me word from the Boss that I'm to ride with you to London. And Mr. Lewis, sub, he's waiting for you in the dining-room. I suspect he has a message for you."

Jim found Goldamid sitting almost up the chimney, gulping down a cup of black coffee. He was still in his dressing-gown, and look bleary-eyed and bad-tempered.
"Hello, Topsy! You appear rather like the morning after the night before!"

"Shut up!" snapped Goldamid. "You weren't working advanced ritual half yesterday. I wouldn't be up now, only J.D. sent for me. He'd orders for you."

"Why the dickens didn't he give them direct?"

"I should imagine he didn't want his little pet to see him. He isn't looking his best this morning—none of the three of us is—or feeling it. But they can do themselves right again, kucky devils! You're to start for town at once, Jim, taking Joshua and the two Spaniards with you. Payton rang up this morning to say that the Moor has been taken off to hospital with pneumonia, and Joshua is being sent up to take his place. We're following by an afternoon train, and Delegana says he will taxi from Paddington. You're to dump the servants at Elm Park Gardens and then push off home. He'll ring up if he wants you later."

"Righto. So long, Topsy; don't cut me out with our beloved Juan!"

Goldamid snarled at him.

The drive back to London was certainly a pleasant contrast to the journey down.

Joshua, without hesitation, ordered Matteo and Garcia into the back seat, and after politely asking Jim's permission, seated himself beside the driver.

"I reckon, sub, you and me had best converse in the French language, else those poor white trash in the back there might catch onto what we say."

From that, he proceeded to be most excellent company, astounding Jim by the knowledge stored behind that wide black forehead. He seemed to have travelled extensively, working in many countries at a variety of different jobs. Thirty-six years of age, he had been born at sea in a British vessel, thereby belonging, as he told Jim proudly, to the parish of Stuyvesant. He spoke English with a carefully cultivated American accent, French with a good sound English one, and addressed Matteo and

Garcia in their own tongue with the guttural hesitancy of a German.

Unlike the majority of Delegana's servants, he appeared to have no fear of his master, frequently alluding to him as "that poor sap," and holding him in much the same contempt as he did Matteo and Garcia.

"Look here, Joshua," Jim asked him presently, "you gave me the third-degree 'Moon' sign the first time I saw you—are you an initiate?"

"I have been one for eleven years. This Western magic is child's play to me. J.D. has knowledge, I grant you, and, with other adepts, can generate the Power; but they are all weaklings, overcome by so short a contact with the devils they think they can command."

Then, quite openly and without the least attempt to be mysterious, he told Jim how the magical appearance-illusion was created.

"Since you and I, m'sieu, are the only sane members of this mad establishment of J.D.'s, I will explain for you," Joshua declared. "You remember when you were alone in the Judgment Room, you were looking at the door by the fireplace?"

"Yes. I was idly counting the studs on it."

"Not idly, m'sieu Hogan. Your attention was guided to it by advanced hypnotism put out by our master from the other room. In your mind he created a picture of a shut door, imprinting it so deeply that your ordinary eye did not see that door open, nor take note that I had stepped through, till the control was lifted and you saw me."

"And your subsequent disappearance," asked Jim, "was that the same?"

"Precisely. There is another door opposite to that, one for which you searched after I had gone, and by which you had entered with J.D. earlier, in order to frighten the fat man."

"So you knew about that too?"

"I was there. It was a difficult undertaking. Not only had you to be controlled—and you are not easily subjected, m'sieu—but the other two as well. For that, J.D. needed aid. I was close behind you. Once I thought you sensed my presence."

"I did," admitted Jim, "but I thought I was getting jumpy and imagining things."

"M'sieu Hogan," said Joshua, "can you make your eyes blur so that you look at an object without really seeing it?"

"Put 'em out of focus, you mean? I can."

"Then, next time you feel urged to look in a certain direction, and you do not know why, blur your vision for a little moment, and afterwards you will see what you are not meant to see. But be careful not to be found out. J.D. trusts you now, but he may not do so always."

For a moment Jim was dumbfounded. Joshua was taking him out of his depth.

"Why do you tell me this?" he asked.

"Because I am a good Christian," was the amazing reply. "I fear God and honor the King, m'sieu. There was a time when I thought the Great Father, who cares not whether a man's skin be black or white, had chosen me as the instrument which would destroy the sinful edifice erected by J.D. Then wisdom came to me, and I saw that I, a colored man, could not do it alone."

"So I prayed the good God to send a man of Western race to accomplish that which I could not do alone. And the Lord has heard my petition, and sent a man from a Western island which has not

yet lost her belief in God—one, moreover, from that small portion of the island which still remains loyal to our King. I do not know when it is you serve—you, who go by the name of James Hogan—but you will never be enslaved by Juan Delegana or the teachings of Comparative Thought."

Jim was thankful the overtake of a heavy tank-lorry gave him a moment to collect his wits.

A fragment of the lecture which Sir Arthur invariably delivered to each successive "hatch" when they left the incubator came seeping through his memory.

"Sooner or later, during your service, will come the moment when someone will see through you. For your sakes, I hope it will be later, when you have acquired sufficient poise to carry you over the sticky patch, for on your handling of the situation will depend your success or failure as an agent of this corps."

For Jim the dreaded moment had arrived, while his second five-year contract had three more years to run.

If only he knew which were the real Joshua, the comic-opera coon who favored the vocabulary of the cheap gangster film, or the companion of to-day's drive, whose ideas had flowed as fluently as his well-turned, if inharmoniously delivered, phrases.

"M'sieu is saying to himself," went on that thick, husky voice, "How far can I trust this darn nigger? He is thinking that—"

"You're a better man than I am, Gunga Din," interrupted Jim, in English.

The thick lips parted in a joyous grin. "Maybe we'll both be 'attin' on the coals, giving drinks to pore damned souls' mighty soon, Mr. Hogan, but I aim that we do it together. I'm your man from this day, sure as you're driving this automobile. As the Book says, 'Whither thou goes I will go, and where thou lodgest I will lodge, thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God,' Mr. Hogan."

For a moment Jim saw himself arriving at the Manse with Joshua in tow, and wondered what would be his parents' reactions. Even though the negro might prove a somewhat inconvenient pet, he was enough of a psychologist to have no doubts as to the man's sincerity now.

"If that is the way you feel about it," he said, relapsing into French once more, "there is no use my putting up a bluff, Joshua. I shall be very glad to have you working with me, and we'll shake hands on the contract when we get rid of these chattering monkeys in the back."

Joshua's sigh nearly lifted Jim from the driving-seat.

"British Secret Service!" he whispered ecstatically.

It was not easy to keep things from Joshua, and by the time they reached London Jim had conceived a very real respect for the entity concealed within an exterior so unattractive to western eyes.

He lunched at Elm Park Gardens, and, after giving the Beloved his English lesson, returned to No. 11, learning from Mrs. Hazel that both Aaron and Wycherly were having an early tea in the Hogan sitting-room.

"Discovered!" was Wycherly's dramatic greeting. "Unexpected return of irate husband! Is it pistols for two and coffee for one, Harry, or shall you perform with the traditional horsewhip?"

"I prefer to say it with crumpets, Bertie—If you greedy hounds have left any—"

"Plenty," volunteered Aroon. "I'll toast some more for you. Any inf., Jim?"

"Tons of it, but not the sort to go with tea. Tell me yours first, both of you. By Jove, Bertie. It's great seeing you! All right your being here?"

"Quite. Most natural for me to want to further my acquaintance with the beautiful Mrs. Hogan after having met her at dinner. Also, Myra is getting very thick with her—wants her to stand sponsor or something at her initiation. I have to pretend to be peeved. By the way, I think the C.T. is in for a rough passage at that Duke's Hall meeting. The 'Britons' are preparing to raise a row."

"Pity. It will give J.D. just the advertisement he wants. They can't be put off, I suppose?"

"Praid not. No official word of it, you see."

"Och well, what is to be, will be. Anything from you, Aroon?"

"Practically nil, except that I've left my cover job."

"Handed the fair authoress the bag, have you?"

"No. She gave it to me. Someone lent her 'Sane Thought' with an article of Eric Manningford's in it, and she tackled me about my membership of the C.T. Of course I had to stick up for my honored President, and say that the article was a pack of lies; whereupon she gave me the choice between remaining her secretary or staying in the C.T. So I found myself with a week's money in lieu of notice."

"Sucks for 'Finance'!" said Jim. "Make 'em laugh like fury, having to pay you more now! Good show, you can give all your time to the job. Better volunteer for work at C.T. headquarters. Mighty interesting, what you've just told me, because it shows that J.D. had some justification for shutting Manningford's mouth, or, rather, drying up his pen. Gather round, my children. This is where Uncle tells you a bedtime story."

Jim had a very attentive audience while he described the events of the Bascombe week-end, and the daylight had faded before he ceased speaking. There was no interruption of the recital when Aroon rose quietly, pulled down the blind, and turned on the light; even though she and Wycherly were enthralled by what they heard, no deviation from the ordinary must be allowed in a house which was constantly under observation. But when she returned to her chair by the fire Wycherly noticed she was pale beneath her make-up and that her fine eyes held an apprehensive light.

"Getting too fond of old Harry," was his mental comment; "I was afraid that would happen."

"And then," finished Jim. "Joshua sprang his bombshell! I nearly put the car over the ditch, trying to decide how to take it, and even now I'm not sure I've done the right thing."

"Sooner or later, during your service," quoted Wycherly. "We've all laughed at that stock phrase in our time. Harry, but the Chief knows more than we do. Personally, I think you did right; you had to take the risk, anyway."

"As you say, I had to take the risk. Joshua is too astute to bluff. If he'd been white, I might have read his expression, but when a fellow has a face like a well-polished boot, it's infernally hard to know what he's thinking."

Wycherly gave a shout of laughter. "Little Harry and his Bearer! We used to have a kid's book of that name at home."

Do you realise that this nigger will probably stick more close than a brother, even after the job is finished? I hope I shall be there to see Lawliver's face when you turn up at headquarters with Little Black Sambo trotting at your heels!"

"Specially if we land in the office via a blank wall!" chuckled Jim. "Joshua is enough of an adept to play that game on his own, and by then I'll most likely be an expert, and will propel myself feet first from the window, landing neatly behind Hais on his impossible charger!"

"Good lord!" said Wycherly. "I can't get over it! You, Harry, you of all people, putting it across J.D. in that crystal-gazing stunt. To say nothing of the telepathy."

"That may come in useful," was the philosophic reply. "If I get 'threw out of hush,' I can go on the hails with my dark A.D.C. Professor Haugh and Chief Boomba Woomba. I'll die a rich man, Bertie."

"Hats! You'll be snatched into a wider sphere by your pal cool Houml. I, too, can talk C.T. shop."

"Then talk it to Aroon," advised Jim. "I'm retiring to my—or, rather, her—bed-chamber to write my report. Can't waste a trustworthy messenger sent by special intervention of my pet deva, you know. Must I code the thing, Bertie?"

"No need. My man is bringing the car round here for me at six and I'm going straight to the Chief's private house. We're hardly likely to lose anything between this and the 'Boltons'."

"Good egg," said Jim thankfully. "That will just halve the time I take over it."

He picked up the portable typewriter he shared with Aroon, and a short time later the steady tick-tick, and the ting of the tiny bell, told that he was hard at work.

Crossing to the mantelpiece, Wycherly lit a cigarette, and stood looking down at the girl in the chair.

"Domestic picture," he remarked. "What are you knitting, Aroon?"

"Socks for Jim. His are in a disgraceful condition. How do you think this job is going, Cecil?"

"Marvellously, from an official standpoint. If certain Continental 'hush' services can be persuaded not to rush things, there ought to be a big killing."

"And from the unofficial angle?"

"Not so good. Looks as if someone is going to cop it before we're through."

"That someone being Jim?"

"Or you, or Topsy, or any of us. S.O. is a queer show, Rooney."

Aroon looked up quickly. Only on very rare occasions did Wycherly use the old, childish nickname.

"Don't hedge," she said. "You meant Jim—why not say so? He's the one of us who is in real danger. Already J.D. has pushed him through far more degrees than he's entitled to, and this 'affinity' business will mean his getting deeper and deeper every day. You've met Delegana, and you must see he's the sort of man who'll have some terrible vengeance ready for anyone who betrays him. Jim may not get out in time."

"There's danger in every big job," Wycherly reminded her. "Harry knew that when he joined Craddock's Own. Look here, Rooney, may I give you some advice, both as your cousin and your senior in the show?"

"Go ahead."

"Don't play your part too thoroughly, old thing."

Color flamed into Aroon's face.

"Cecil! What do you mean by that?"

"You may be cast for Harry's wife in this job," said Wycherly deliberately. "Next one may see you 'married' to someone else. Partnerships aren't permanent fixtures, you know, and undue concern for one's teammates only impairs efficiency. You're not doing the job, or Harry, any good by sitting up in a panic every night he's a bit late at Delegana's."

"I don't!" stared Aroon.

"Have it your own way. Ignore the gipsy's warning if you like, but rules are rules in Craddock's Own, and you're coming dangerously near to breaking one of them. Rooney my dear. Think over what I've said while I go and see how Harry's getting on with his report."

"You're not going to suggest things to him—"

"My dear child," drawled Wycherly. "I never plant seeds in barren ground. I probably know Harry better than you do. For him, a show like this means the job, the whole job, and nothing but the job. He wouldn't have time for side-issues, even if he were aware of their existence."

He lounged out of the room, and Aroon's knitting rested unheeded on her knee. It was quiet on that upper landing which they had to themselves during Mrs. Hazel's working hours, and through the thin dividing-walls she could hear the steady murmur of voices. There were details of the Bascombe week-end, which Jim had kept till he could get Wycherly alone.

Slowly her anger faded. For years Cecil Wycherly had been her confidant in time of trouble. At ten, she had wept stormily in his fifteen-year-old arms over the death of a favorite pony; at sixteen, she had thrilled to the honor of being taken out from her boarding-school by her handsome grown-up cousin; at twenty she had confided to him—and to no one else—that her marriage with Rupert Solway was going the way of all alliances contracted through the medium of an ambitious and worldly-minded aunt. At twenty-three she had been grateful for his escort to and from the Courts of Admiralty, Probate and Divorce. And now, the thirty-one-year-old Cecil was giving her fatherly advice, warning her not to fall in love with Jim! Absurd!

There was a sudden laugh in the next room, and just as the two men emerged, the telephone extension recently installed in the sitting-room gave its apologetic tinkle. Jim lifted the receiver.

"Speaking . . . Right . . . Switch him through, Mrs. H., please." He covered the mouthpiece and spoke softly to the others. "J.D. on the wire. Keep quiet, you two. Hello? . . . That you, Juan? . . . What? . . ."

"Yes, I'm quite alone; the woman who answered was the landlady. She's put you through to me now."

There followed a long pause while the unseen voice creaked at the other end of the wire, and Jim traced small, absurd faces on the message-pad as he listened.

"I'm awfully sorry," he said at last, "but, you see, I was with my wife—yes, not ideal for reception . . . Right, I'll come along now; be with you almost at once . . ."

(TO BE CONCLUDED NEXT WEEK.)

(All characters in this novel are fictitious, and have no reference to any living person.)

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